



NEW
TRANSLATION, EXPOSITION,
AND
Chronological Arrangement,
OF THE
BOOK OF PSALMS;
WITH
CRITICAL NOTES ON THE HEBREW TEXT.

BY
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P R E F A C E.

FROM his earliest days the author of this volume has cherished a peculiar delight in the inspired Songs of Zion. Besides their original beauty and poetical splendour; their richness of sentiment and fulness of doctrine, there are many other reasons which greatly endear the BOOK OF PSALMS to the nation to which the author belongs. Whilst with some, and especially with the unlearned, that love for it runs out to superstition; others find in it a fountain of healing balm, an exhaustless treasure of instruction and warning, of comfort and consolation, and it is regarded with the greatest delight as the standing glory of Israel. But although he always boasted in it as in the possession of a precious jewel, yet he never knew the real inestimable value of it until the time when the merciful Father of his soul was pleased to bring him to the knowledge of the Saviour of whom the Psalms speak so much. It was then that he saw that his former knowledge of them was but as a spark of fire covered with ashes on the hearth compared with the radiant sun at bright noon-day. It was then only that he began to comprehend with unspeakable joy how those celestial oracles diffuse splendour and light around them. Whilst they send forth brilliant rays as testimonies and living witnesses regarding Christ and His Church, that same light is reflected back on the royal Psalmist, who was honoured by the Divine Spirit to be the channel through which those cheering and soul-animating tidings of salvation were conveyed to a guilty world. No other book besides Isaiah's Prophecies forms such a glorious chain of the purest gold to combine the oracles of the Old and New Testament Scriptures as the Book of Psalms does.

For reasons stated at large in the general Introduction, it had long been the author's desire to write something on the Psalms, but he was prevented

by various circumstances. At length it pleased God to afford him the opportunity, and to enable him to begin the work, and to finish it; and he has now the satisfaction of laying it before the Christian public of Britain, with the earnest and humble prayer that the Lord may make it useful, and conducive to the promotion of His glory, and thus establish the work of the author's hands upon him.

As the author trusts that all necessary information with respect to the nature and design of this book has been satisfactorily brought forward in the Introduction, he thinks it superfluous to enlarge here; and he would only solicit the attention of the reader to the following few remarks.

1. Within the limits of this volume it was utterly impossible to give a general practical application of all the Psalms, or to show at large in individual Psalms their bearing on, and relation to the Christian Church, unless where the immediate Messianic references called upon him to do so; it having been his chief design to give a literal translation of them—bring out their meaning—show the Messianic prophecies—and remove critical difficulties.

2. He begs the reader's special attention and calm judgment when perusing these *notes* in which German rationalism is attacked, exposed, and condemned. He begs him not to pronounce the language too strong or uncharitable until he has calmly considered those poisonous doctrines of, alas! deep-sunk Germany, and seen their lamentable tendency, and the ravages that those wolves in sheep's clothing have already made in the Christian Church even in this country.

3. The author is prepared to meet any objection as to the literal accuracy of the translation of the Hebrew text; and he will be happy to give satisfaction to any critic requesting such an explanation, even to the extent of any opinion or doctrine advanced in this volume.

4. The author is ready, and will be glad to meet any of the friends of German theology in this country who may be disposed, and to vindicate those points which he has brought forward in this book, and condemned as

erroneous, and as opposed and derogatory to the glory and authority of the Holy Scriptures.

5. He regrets that time and circumstances, as well as the limits of this volume, did not allow him, towards the close of the work, to do justice in the way of exposition to several Psalms well worthy of minute and extended inquiry. He was obliged to confine himself to what he hopes and thinks is a literal and true translation of the text, and to explanatory notes where needed.

6. As the author now leaves this country for the scene of his Missionary labours in Algiers, any correspondence will be easily accomplished through the Secretary of the Scottish Society for the Conversion of Israel, Glasgow.

B. W.

DUNDEE, 6th April, 1852.

CHRONOLOGICAL ARRANGEMENT OF PSALMS.

Common Order.	Chronologically.	Common Order.	Chronologically.
XXIII.	I.	CV.	XXXVII.
XXXVIII.	II.	CVI.	XXXVIII.
CXI.	III.	CVII.	XXXIX.
CXII.	IV.	XLIV.	XL.
VIII.	V.	LXXIII.	XLI.
XIX.	VI.	XLIX.	XLII.
CIV.	VII.	XCII.	XLIII.
LXIV.	VIII.	XCIII.	XLIV.
CXL.	IX.	XXVIII.	XLV.
LXXXVI.	X.	XXXVI.	XLVI.
LIX.	XI.	XXXIX.	XLVII.
LVI.	XII.	XXX.	XLVIII.
XXII.	XIII.	CL.	XLIX.
XXXIV.	XIV.	CXLIV.	L.
CXLI.	XV.	XC.	LI.
CXLIII.	XVI.	XXIV.	LII.
LXXVII.	XVII.	XLVII.	LIII.
LXXXVIII.	XVIII.	XCVI.	LIV.
LII.	XIX.	XCVII.	LV.
XCIV.	XX.	XCVIII.	LVI.
X.	XXI.	XCIX.	LVII.
XI.	XXII.	C.	LVIII.
XII.	XXIII.	LXI.	LIX.
XIII.	XXIV.	LXV.	LX.
XIV.	XXV.	LXVI.	LXI.
LIII.	XXVI.	LXVII.	LXII.
XXXI.	XXVII.	XXVI.	LXIII.
LXIII.	XXVIII.	XXVII.	LXIV.
LIV.	XXIX.	XV.	LXV.
XXXV.	XXX.	L.	LXVI.
LVII.	XXXI.	CXIII.	LXVII.
LVIII.	XXXII.	CXIV.	LXVIII.
XVII.	XXXIII.	CXV.	LXIX.
CXLI.	XXXIV.	CXVI.	LXX.
XXXVII.	XXXV.	CXVII.	LXXI.
CXIX.	XXXVI.	CXVIII.	LXXII.

Common Order.	Chronologically.	Common Order.	Chronologically.
CXXXV.	LXXXIII.	XLII.	CXII.
CXXXVI.	LXXXIV.	XLIII.	CXIII.
CXLV.	LXXXV.	LXXXIV. 84	CXIV. — 114
CXLVI.	LXXXVI.	LXXXIX.	CXV.
CXLVII.	LXXXVII.	XX.	CXVI.
CXLVIII.	LXXXVIII.	IX.	CXVII.
CXLIX.	LXXXIX.	LXII.	CXVIII.
CL.	LXXX.	LXXXV.	CXIX.
I.	LXXXI.	LXVIII.	CXX.
II.	LXXXII.	XXIX.	CXXI.
XXI.	LXXXIII.	CXXI.	CXXII.
LXXXVII.	LXXXIV.	CXX.	CXXIII.
XVI.	LXXXV.	CXXIII.	CXXIV.
CX.	LXXXVI.	CXXIV.	CXXV.
XLV.	LXXXVII.	CXXXI.	CXXVI.
LX.	LXXXVIII.	CXXXIII.	CXXVII.
CVIII.	LXXXIX.	CXVI.	CXXVIII.
XLVI.	XC.	CXXVIII.	CXXIX.
XLVIII.	XCI.	CXXV.	CXXX.
XVIII.	XCII.	CXXIX.	CXXXI.
LI.	XCIII.	CXXXII.	CXXXII.
XXXII.	XCIV.	CXXX.	CXXXIII.
XXXIII.	XCv.	CXXII.	CXXXIV.
XL.	XCVI.	CXXXIV.	CXXXV.
CXXXIX.	XCVII.	CXXXVII.	CXXXVI.
LXIX.	XCVIII.	LXXII.	CXXXVII.
LXX.	XCIX.	X.	CXXXVIII.
LXXI.	C.	XCI.	CXXXIX.
XXV.	CI.	LXXXVIII.	CXL.
CIII.	CII.	LXXXII.	CXLI.
VII.	CIII.	LXXXIII.	CXLII.
LV.	CIV.	LXXXI.	CXLIII.
CIX.	CV.	LXXV.	CXLIV.
III.	CVI.	LXXXVI.	CXLV.
IV.	CVII.	LXXXIV.	CXLVI.
V.	CVIII.	LXXIX.	CXLVII.
VI.	CIX.	LXXX.	CXLVIII.
XXXVIII.	CX.	CXXXVII.	CXLIX.
XLI.	CXI.	CII.	CL.

ERRATA.

Page 143, line 25, for "Judah," read "Jacob."

" 246, foot-note, for "carefully," read "carefully."

285, verse 8, for "morning," read "morn'g."

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

IN FOUR PARTS.

PART I.

CONTAINING AN EXPOSITION OF JACOB'S PROPHECY REGARDING THE SCEPTRE OF
JUDAH AND THE COMING OF SHILOH—DAVID, IN HIS PERSON AND IN HIS REIGN,
A TYPE OF SHILOH.

THE Psalms of David may be considered as the *head* river of Messianic Prophecies. In that book we have the first collecting together of those living waters, the glorious springs of which are in the books of Moses. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," Gen. iii. 15; "The coming of Shiloh, unto whom the gathering of the nations shall be," Gen. xlix. 10; and some similar brief passages, are the fountains which form, by the union of their streams, a mighty Jordan in the Book of Psalms. Here we have recorded the advent of the Messiah and its glorious results—His incarnation, birth, and offices—His sufferings, death, and resurrection—His triumph over death and hell, and his ascension to heaven, leading captivity captive—His everlasting kingdom and priesthood on Jehovah's throne—the establishment and prosperity, and the persecutions and sufferings of his mystical body the church—the conversion to Himself of all nations and families of the earth in the latter days—and the great and terrible day of universal judgment, and the eternal glory to follow. Like the river that watered the garden of Eden which was divided into several streams, the spiritual river of the Psalms is separated into many branches in the books of the prophets, all of which again pour their living waters into the great ocean of New Testament revelation.

The Patriarch Jacob, feeling his end drawing near, summoned his sons, the heads of the twelve tribes, around his bed, that they might receive his last benediction, and hear what should befall them in the latter days. Having dispossessed Reuben of his birth-right, and sternly rebuked Simeon and Levi for their fierce cruelty at Shalem the city of Shechem, he addressed Judah in the following sublime strain—"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh

come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be: Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk." Gen. xlix. 8—12. This passage is full of Messianic revelations, and is thus one of the most glorious sources opened by the Holy Spirit. At first indeed, and for many ages after, it was but a small rivulet, gliding noiselessly on through the silent vales of Sharon; but in the time of David it became a mighty stream.*

In this passage Jesus, and Jesus alone, is spoken of. The dying patriarch indeed addresses Judah his son, but his spiritual eye is directed to Shiloh, the descendant of Judah—to the Messiah—who was to be the glory and crown of that tribe. Judah was thus the poetical figure only, while Shiloh, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," was the spiritual object contemplated by Jacob. In 1 Chron. v. 2 we read, "For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief prince;" and in Rev. v. 5 we read, "Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed." Hence we see that the one was typical of the other, David the temporal prince being the type of the spiritual Lion of the tribe of Judah. It cannot then be reasonably supposed that the dying patriarch spoke only of the type, without reference to the great Antitype. Nay, it is evident that the whole passage refers exclusively to Shiloh, and that Judah is merely the figure as being the father of Shiloh according to the flesh. Now then, let the reader draw near the dying bed of the inspired Jacob, and hear the Spirit addressing, not Judah, Leah's son, so much, as, under figure of him, Shiloh, the Son of God: "Judah," saith the Spirit, "thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemy: thy father's children shall worship thee." This is the literal translation of the verse; and can there be any doubt that Jesus alone, the descendant of Judah according to the flesh, is the blessed personage spoken of? "Thou, blessed Jesus, art he whom thy brethren shalt praise." And why? "Because thine hand shall be in the neck of thine enemy, even Satan, whose head thou shalt bruise; and therefore, as such, as the Messiah, as the Saviour of the world, 'thy father's children shall worship thee.'" In Ps. lxxviii. 21, David says, Jehovah shall wound the head of his enemies, even the hairy neck of him who continues in his rebellion; and he speaks in this passage (as we shall see when we come to treat of it in its proper place) of the triumph of the Messiah over the rebellious devil, and therefore in a subsequent verse he summons not only his brethren according to the flesh, but all the world, to unite in the ascription of praise, "Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto Jehovah. Selah."

The Spirit, speaking by Jacob, next proceeds to represent the triumph of the young Lion of the tribe of Judah over the old roaring lion, the

* This blessed passage laid hold on the mind of the author, when but a boy, with such force, that he was constrained to ask his father where the sceptre of Judah was now? and where the kingdom and throne of Shiloh? His anxious enquiries could not be satisfied with the phantom Shiloh which his father endeavoured to substitute for the true one. The mystery became grievous to him, and for fourteen years was as a fire shut up in his bones. But when the blessed Spirit, the Comforter, was pleased in sovereign love to visit his soul, and to reveal to him Jesus, the Saviour of the world, as the true Shiloh of Jacob's prophecy, no fewer than eighty-four passages, which were formerly dark and meaningless to him, became bright and gloriously intelligible in the light of the gospel.

devil, as consisting in the delivering of the prey out of his devouring jaws. "Judah," says Jacob, "is a young lion;" but, dropping the figure, he addresses that young lion personally as his descendant and son: "My son, from destruction hast thou delivered." This is the literal translation of the clause, and signifies: "O thou my blessed son, thou conquering young lion of Judah's tribe, thou hast delivered from destruction," or, "from being torn." But, from destruction, or from being torn, by whom? Unquestionably by Satan. "He," that is Satan, the enemy mentioned in the preceding verse, "stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion: O who could rouse him up?" What sublimity and glory in these words! Who could rouse up that old roaring lion from his prey? Who could destroy the power of that mighty and determined enemy of immortal souls? Who but Jesus, the triumphant Son of God, the almighty young Lion of the tribe of Judah? He has broken the neck of the enemy, and delivered the prey from his grasp. He stooped down and couched as an old lion over fallen and enslaved men, and who but Jesus could rouse him up?

The next verse of this passage is perhaps the most important, and is equally full of meaning. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." It may be observed generally regarding this verse, that while both Jews and Gentiles in every age have agreed that it has a direct reference to the Messiah, and that the term "Shiloh" can denote none other than he, it has nevertheless been the subject of much controversy. Not only have the unbelieving Jews striven in vain to account for the absence of the sceptre of Judah, while denying the advent of Shiloh as having been fulfilled in that of Jesus; but even Christian writers have been perplexed for the same reason with respect to the period of the Babylonish captivity, and even all the time of the second temple, when there was evidently no ruling monarch of Judah's tribe. Nor is this the only difficulty, for the very word "Shiloh," which is universally acknowledged to mean the Messiah, has been variously interpreted, according to the different notions and conjectures of commentators, whether Jewish or Christian. Some of the ancients interpret "Shiloh" as אֲשֶׁר לוֹ (asher lo), "whose it is," and render the verse thus, "until he come, whose the dominion, or the kingdom, is." This opinion is followed by all the Jewish Targums, or early interpreters, and is also received by many Christian writers. Others maintain that the word is derived from שָׁלַח (shalach) signifying "to send," and read the passage thus, "until he come who is to be sent." The version of the Septuagint is the most perverted, "until the things come that are laid up for him."* Of the many more modern opinions respecting the etymology of this word I shall notice only two. The one traces it to the Hebrew root שָׁלַח (Shaleh), which signifies "to be at peace." Parkhurst, in his Hebrew Lexicon, accordingly suggests the reading, "until the giver of peace come." The other opinion is, that "Shiloh" is derived from

* The speculating Cabalists attempt to remove the difficulty by an arithmetical interpretation. They say that by this method the words יָבֹא שִׁילֹה (Yavoh Shiloh, that is, "Come Shiloh"), amount to the number 358; and the word מָשִׁיחַ (Mashiah, that is, "Messiah"), makes up the same number. and therefore that they both respectively mean the same thing—that is, when each letter is counted according to its arithmetical value.

שׂוֹלוֹ (Shaol), "to ask, seek, or require," and reads the passage thus, "until the desired, or asked for, shall come."

Such are some of the numerous conjectures regarding the root from which the word "Shiloh" is derived. All agree in this, however, that by it the Messiah, the great Saviour of the world, is intended. But, at the same time, none of these interpretations, as every Hebrew scholar knows, can stand the test of critical examination. In order therefore to remove these two difficulties from this important passage, we shall, first of all, explain what is meant by "Shiloh," as this is the main subject of the verse; and then enquire what is signified by the assertion, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah," &c.

The reader will remember how the inspired patriarch, in that extraordinary hour, had his spiritual eye directed to the Messiah, and that Judah was only the poetical figure. We know from many parts of Scripture, that the holy patriarchs looked forward with great delight to the coming of the Son of Man—the promised seed of the woman. And Jacob, filled as he was with the Holy Spirit, and realizing by faith the verification of the promise, said in perfect assurance, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah . . . until that glorious gift promised to the woman come," viz., until her promised seed should appear; for the true signification of the word "Shiloh" is, "a glorious gift to her." It is a compound of two words שַׁי (Shai), and לָהּ (la); the former signifying, "an important gift," a glorious present," Psalms lxxviii. 29, lxxvi. 11; Isaiah xviii. 7, and the latter, "to her;" and thus the passage may be read, "until Shiloh, viz., the glorious gift, or present, promised to her, the woman, shall come, unto whom the gathering of the nations shall be."

We proceed now to enquire into the meaning of the assertion, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah," &c. The Hebrew word שֵׁבֶט (Shevet), which is rendered "sceptre," literally signifies "a rod," "a staff," and also "a shepherd's crook;" but it has various figurative significations, and denotes, "authority and power," whereof the sceptre is the emblem; and also "a tribe," or branch of a family or nation, shooting from one common stock. Now, taking the word in its widest figurative sense, the passage predicts that Judah would remain a distinct, powerful, and ruling tribe, enjoying its own laws, and government, and judges (the word מְחֹקֵק [mechokek], rendered "lawgiver," literally meaning "a teacher, or instructor of the laws"), till the coming of Christ. And accordingly we find that this was the case; for even during the Babylonish captivity this tribe had its own judges and lawgivers, as Mordecai, Daniel, Nehemiah, and others. They continued in Babylon not only a distinct people, a free colony, but their own elders ordered and governed all their civil and ecclesiastical affairs. And from the time of their return to Jerusalem after the captivity till the coming of "Shiloh," alike under the Maccabees as under the Herods, Judah remained a distinct and ruling tribe. While the ten tribes were kept in slavery, Judah remained in Palestine, and, whether subject to the Persians, the Greeks, or the Romans, they always continued a distinct people, governed by their own laws. Still farther, Judah was ruled by their own king in civil, and by their Sanhedrim in ecclesiastical affairs, even during the days of Messiah on earth. Thus when the Jews

brought Jesus before Pilate for judgment against him, he said to them, "Take ye him, and judge him according to your law." John xviii. 31. And on one occasion Jesus himself said, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat : all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do," Matth. xxiii. 2, 3—thus recognizing them as regularly constituted judges. If it be objected to this explanation, that Benjamin, as well as Judah, was in Jerusalem during the second temple ; it may be replied, that this was foretold by Jacob on the same solemn occasion—for in the 27th verse we read, "Benjamin shall raven as a wolf : in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil"—words how comprehensive and sublime ! In the morning of the Jewish regal form of government, Benjamin devoured the whole prey ; the dominion was entirely his ; Saul, the first king of Israel, was chosen from his tribe. And in the evening of that government, when the ten tribes were carried into captivity and reduced to slavery, Benjamin remained still, and divided the spoil between himself and his brother Judah.—With this explanation, then, the passage should be read as follows : "Judah shall not cease to be a ruling tribe, nor shall a judge fail from his posterity, until the *promised* seed, or gift of the woman, come, unto whom the gathering of the nations shall be." This plainly intimates, that Judah would be kept separate and distinct as a tribe till the coming of the Messiah ; but that thereafter this distinction would cease, and they would be promiscuously commingled with the other Israelites. In Micah v. 2 we read : "And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler, or prince, in Israel ; and his goings forth have been from of old, or from the days of antiquity ;" that is : the goings forth of the Messiah for the destruction of his enemy, Satan, and for the salvation of his people, were determined and foretold in former days. The prophet proceeds : "Therefore will he give them up ;" or rather, "Certainly he," that is, the Lord, "will grant these things at the time when the travailing woman hath brought forth ; then the remnant of his brethren," viz., the remnant of Judah, "shall return unto the children of Israel." This passage clearly shows that Judah was to be preserved distinct as a tribe only till the Messiah should come, after which he was to be mixed with and lost among the rest of Israel. And who can point out the tribe of Judah now ?

When the Patriarch thus predicted the coming of Shiloh, unto whom the gathering of the nations was to be, he did not lose sight of the mysterious means by which that gathering was to be effected. And what were these means ? Hear the language of Shiloh himself : "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John xii. 32. Jacob therefore proceeds to describe Shiloh's last entrance into Jerusalem before, and with the view of, finishing the work which had been given him to do : "His foal will be bound unto a vine, and his ass's colt unto a vine-branch." This prediction was repeated by the prophet Zechariah after the lapse of 1171 years : "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem : behold, thy King cometh unto thee : he is just, and a *sustained Saviour* (sustained by Jehovah the Father) ; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass." Zech. ix. 9. After a farther period of 551 years, this prophecy, as we find from the history of the Evangelists, was literally fulfilled. From the Mount of Olives Shiloh sent two of his disciples to bring him the ass on which he was to ride into the city of

Jerusalem. Matth. xxi. 1—5; Mark xi. 1—11; Luke xix. 29—38. But although the children of Jerusalem rejoiced exceedingly when he entered the city, and praised God with a loud voice, saying, "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest;" yet in the course of a very few days Jesus had to drain a bitter cup. He was to be offered for the remission of sin—to be scourged, and pierced, and crucified. Jacob describes this in the last clause of the eleventh verse, though under a mysterious figure: "He shall wash his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes." The prophet Isaiah makes use of the same phraseology: "Who is this coming from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? Is this not he who was glorious in his apparel, now stretched down in fetters in all the greatness of his strength?" But the Saviour answers: "I am he that speaks in righteousness, mighty to save." Again, "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat?" The Saviour replies: "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me; and because I have trodden them in my anger, and trampled them in my fury, their blood sprinkled my garments, and I have stained all my raiment." And for what purpose was all that mysterious work? "For the day of vengeance was in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed had come." Isa. lxiii. 1—4. Under such figures the Spirit was pleased, both by the mouth of Jacob and of Isaiah, to typify the sufferings of Shiloh and his blood shedding, by which he would achieve the redemption of his people and the utter discomfiture of his foes.

Having thus considered the principal source of the Messianic prophecies, and the prediction specially referring to the kingdom of Judah, we shall now call the reader's attention to a point of great importance in connexion with this subject. Though it is quite evident from the prediction of Jacob that the royal house of Israel was to be chosen out of the tribe of Judah, from which Shiloh was to descend, yet the question arises: why did not Moses institute it as a binding law that their kings must be of this tribe? "When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee . . . and shalt say, I will set a king over me. . . . Thou shalt in anywise set him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee." Deut. xvii. 14, 15. Nothing is expressly mentioned concerning Judah in this passage: only, the words, "whom the Lord thy God shall choose" vest the prerogative of choice in God alone. Accordingly, when Israel pressed Samuel that he should set a king over them, we find that the matter was entirely referred to God that he might make choice of whom he pleased to be their king. Acquainted, as doubtless they would be, with their ancestor's prediction respecting the tribe of Judah, God's choice of Saul would appear to them strange and inexplicable. Saul himself, who was of the tribe of Benjamin, was astonished, and said to Samuel, "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou to me such strange words? 1 Sam. ix. 21. But surely God had thus his own purposes to fulfil; for let it be observed, first of all, that Israel in seeking a king, acted in direct opposition to the will of God, as we hear him saying to Samuel, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them," viii. 7. The thunderings and rain which were sent in answer to the call of Samuel,

shewed the Divine displeasure with them on account of this thing, and made them tremble, xii. 16--19. In chapter ix. 17, there is the following very peculiar expression: "And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, Behold the man of whom I said unto thee, he shall *restrain my people*." In the common version it is rendered, "he shall reign over my people;" but the Hebrew word יַעֲצֹר (Yaatzor), means "restrain," or "tyrannize."

Accordingly, we find in chap. viii., that in consequence of their still persisting in their demand for a king, saying, "Nay, but we will have a king over us," notwithstanding Samuel's remonstrances, and his vivid description of the evils to which they would be subjected under the regal form of government which they so wickedly desired, God said, "Here is the man who shall restrain my people, or tyrannize over them." And Hosea says, "I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath," Hos. xiii. 11; as if God thereby designed to intimate that *his* time for appointing them a king had not then arrived, but that he gave them one, who would exercise tyrannic sway over them, in order that he might punish them for their wicked demand; just as he granted to their fathers in the wilderness what they impiously desired, but on account of which he visited them with awful expressions of his righteous anger.

Let it be observed, secondly, that David was to be the divinely approved and rightful king of Israel, and as such was destined to be the most illustrious type of Immanuel; but that he might be fitted to answer the great purposes which God designed to effect by him, it was necessary that he should undergo a process of refinement in the furnace of affliction, persecution, and trial. He was not only to collect vast sums of silver and gold, wherewith the temple at Jerusalem, God's visible sanctuary, was to be built, but he was to be the inspired author of invaluable and glorious oracles, which were to be transmitted to the church for her edification in all succeeding ages. The trials and persecutions which David endured at the hand of Saul, often awakened his harp, and put many a sweet song into his mouth; in which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he spake of the Man of Sorrows, his great Antitype. Thus by such wicked means Saul was, as it were, David's visible schoolmaster, and gave occasion for the composition of many a sublime song of Zion. The book of Esther furnishes a striking illustration of the mysteriousness of God's ways. Yet we see how all the events there recorded terminated at last in the accomplishment of God's purpose, which was, the deliverance of the Jews, and the destruction of their malignant enemy; an accomplishment brought about by the most unlikely means. So, therefore, we need not be surprised at the preparations which God made for the establishment of the kingdom of Judah, nor at the means which he employed to qualify David for occupying the throne thereof as the type of the Messiah.

PART II.

TREATING OF THE INSPIRATION OF THE PROPHETS IN GENERAL; THEIR VISIONS AND DREAMS, AND VARIED CHARACTER OF THE SAME—INFLUENCE OF INSPIRATION—DAVID CALLED AND INSPIRED TO COMPOSE THE PSALMS—CHARACTER OF THE PSALMS.

Revelation is an invaluable gift of the Holy Spirit bestowed on man, in order that he might understand the mind and will of his holy Creator. The messengers of God, who were employed as instruments to convey divine and animated oracles to the children of men, were endowed with various gifts and powers. Moses was honoured above all other prophets, according to the testimony he received from the Most High. "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream: my servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all my house; with him do I speak mouth to mouth even apparently and not in dark speeches, and he doth behold the similitude of the Lord." Num. xii. 6—8. From this passage it is plain that Moses was distinguished as a prophet, in that he heard the voice of the Lord as distinctly as if it had been the voice of a man. But more than this, it shows us that the other prophets must have frequently communicated predictions and revelations of the matter of which they themselves had no thorough conception. Unto them many an oracle must have seemed "a dark speech;" many a vision an unexplained riddle; and many a revelation an unveiled mystery.

The revelations made by the prophets were of varied kinds, and were distinguished by different terms in the Hebrew language: One is *חֲזוֹן* (Chazon), or *חִזְיוֹן* (Chizayon), a supernatural vision by objects presented to the view of the prophet in an extraordinary manner. Of this kind were the vision of Isaiah, when he saw the Most High on his throne of glory, Is. vi.; the vision of Jeremiah, when called to enter upon the prophetic office, Jer. i.; the wonderful visions of Ezekiel, chaps. i., x.; and the visions of Daniel, chaps. vii.—xi. In these and similar visions the prophets *saw* and *heard*. They beheld the objects presented, and which were designed to attract their attention or to reveal unto them things to come, as in the following instances: "And I *saw* the Lord sitting upon a throne," Is. vi. 1; "Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what *seest* thou?" Jer. i. 11; "And I *saw* visions of God," Ezek. i. 1; "I *saw* in my vision by night," Dan. vii. 2. But on these occasions they also heard a voice, or voices, uttering intelligible sounds: "And I *heard* the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send?" Is. vi. 8; "And the Lord *said* unto me," Jer. i. 7; "And I *heard* a voice of one that spake," Ezek. i. 28; "Then I *heard* one saint speaking," Dan. viii. 13. By such extraordinary visions most of the ancient prophets were called and consecrated to their sacred office, and were afterwards frequently visited by the spirit of prophecy.

These visions were, however, varied in their manner, sometimes the prophet saw a vision without hearing any voice, as in Daniel's vision, chap. vii. 1—7, at other times they heard a voice without seeing any object; so it was with young Samuel—1 Sam. iii. 3—15. In this case,

although Samuel conversed with the Lord, yet he saw nothing. A vision of this kind is denominated in Hebrew **מַרְאֵה** (Marah,) a sight, or an appearance. So it is styled in 1 Sam. iii. 15, and Gen. xli. 2. Although no form was seen on these occasions, still it denotes a "mental sight," a spiritual representation. The same word is used in Numbers xii. 6, "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in an appearance," **בַּמַּרְאֵה**, (Ba-marah.) This must be such an appearance as that in which the Lord made himself known unto Samuel, as in both cases the term "Marah" is employed.

Now, from the above statements we may learn some important facts:—1st, When the Lord said Numb. xii., "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision" (or, as we before rendered it, "in an appearance," or, "in a mental sight"), "and will speak unto him in a dream." The two modes of "making himself known in a vision," and "speaking in a dream," must be one and the same appearance to one and the same individual, and not as if they were two distinct manners in which the Lord meets the prophet. This we may learn from the case of Samuel. The Lord appeared unto him by calling him three times. He made himself known unto him by a vision—by an extraordinary visitation—and at the sametime he spoke to him in a dream. 2d, We may learn the nature of a prophetic dream, and the peculiarity of its character, so that the prophet could in no wise mistake it for an ordinary dream produced by natural causes. 3d, We see that in some instances these visitations of God to his servants the prophets overwhelmed them with fear and trembling, while in others, their calmness and serenity were undisturbed. In the former, the awful glory of the objects presented to their view filled them with terror, of which we have striking illustrations in Jacob's vision of the ladder—in Isaiah's vision of Jehovah's high throne, &c.—and in the celestial things which Ezekiel saw, and the tremendous voices which he heard. But this was not the case with Abraham, and Samuel, and others, because the Lord made himself known to them by calling them by their names, and only speaking to them, not showing them anything besides.

After the first visitation, or consecration of the prophets in the manner described above (and in many other ways in which they received their first call to their holy office), they were frequently visited by an impulse of the Spirit, by which they were enabled to foretell things to come—to reveal extraordinary matters of the mysteries of heaven—to speak unto Israel in the name of God—and to predict to many countries and nations their future doom. This is styled in the Hebrew **הִתְנַבֵּא** (Hithnabe), "to prophesy," or "to bring," or "to convey," mysterious and heavenly tidings unto man. The prophet therefore is called **נָבִיא** (Navie), "Bringer," or "Conveyer" of heavenly tidings. The prophecy itself is therefore called **נְבוּאָה** (Nevuah), "the conveyed" narratives or tidings from above.

That the prophets were not always under the influence of inspiration, but had to wait for the impulses of the Spirit, we may learn from many expressions of Scripture. When the three kings came to the prophet Elisha, and prevailed with him by their petitions to give them water for their fainting armies, the prophet said, "Bring me now a minstrel; and it came to

pass when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him." 2 Kings iii. 15. Therefore we usually meet with the expression, "and the *word* of the Lord came unto me." This was always the case with the prophets after their first call. Though Isaiah records his first call only in the sixth chapter of his book, yet internal evidence proves that it preceded the prophecies in the first five chapters. From the frequent use which the prophets make of the phrase, "and the *word* of the Lord came to me," or, "the hand of the Lord," which means also the impulse of the Spirit, we see clearly that they had to wait for the Spirit of prophecy. Moreover, we have this expressly stated by the prophet Ezekiel, where the Lord said to him: "But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God." Ezek. iii. 27. We learn also that the prophet Habakkuk was waiting for an answer from God when he said, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me." Hab. ii. 1. It is thus evident that the pen of the prophets was never employed unless when commissioned by the Holy Ghost, and that depended entirely upon the frequency of the Spirit's visitations. Some of the prophets received more, and others fewer messages from above; but what they did receive they left to posterity. The minor prophets, as well as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, might have written many other things besides those which we possess, but they were not authorized to hand these down to Israel. Those only which were dictated by the Spirit of prophecy have been handed down to posterity as sacred.

What the feeling of the sacred writer was, when under the influence of the blessed Spirit, we can no more ascertain, than we can the experience and feelings of the saints in the heavenly world, when enjoying the gracious presence of their Messiah as he walks between the candlesticks. It is doubtless beyond the reach of an uninspired man to delineate such feelings as the ancient prophets must have then experienced; but it may be, that if they had attempted such a delineation, they might have found no fitting language for it. When by an extraordinary and overwhelming vision the prophet's senses were suspended, and he fell down trembling upon his face, the Lord raised him when he would speak with him. "And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. And the Spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me." Ezek. ii. 1, 2. Again, "And the hand of the Lord was there upon me, and he said unto me, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee. Then I arose and went forth into the plain, and behold, the glory of the Lord stood there, as the glory which I saw by the river of Chebar: and I fell on my face. Then the Spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me," &c. Here we see that when the Spirit of prophecy entered the mind of Ezekiel, he raised him from his prostrate condition, and restored his senses, in order that he might be made fit for receiving the divine message. Sometimes the prophets were so entirely filled with the Spirit as to lose all self-command. They were then bound to go wherever the Spirit led them, to do whatever the Spirit directed them to do, and to say nothing but what the Spirit put into their mouth. For all this we have express passages of Scripture. "So the Spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit, and the hand of the Lord was strong upon me." Ezek. iii. 14. From this passage we

see, that the Spirit took entire possession of the prophet, and carried him whithersoever it pleased him. We learn also, that the prophets in such a state felt greatly oppressed, and their bodily frame seems to have been subjected to severe suffering: "And I went in *bitterness*, in the *heat* of my spirit"—"and the hand of the Lord was *strong* (or *heavy*) upon me."

In like manner, the prophet Elijah seems to have been much led, and carried from place to place. Obadiah, the servant of God, said to him on one occasion, "And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy Lord, behold Elijah is here. And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me; but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth." 1 Kings xviii. 11, 12. We may learn the same thing from the address of the sons of the prophets to Elisha: "Let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master, lest peradventure the Spirit of God has taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley." 2 Kings ii. 16. The apostle Paul appears to have been in a similar condition, when he said, "And now, behold, I go *bound* in the Spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there." Acts xx. 22.

Moreover, we are told that when the apostles of Christ were filled with the Holy Ghost, "they began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts ii. 4. From this fact it is quite evident, that they were employed by the Holy Ghost as instruments to utter prophecies in tongues, of which they were alike ignorant both formerly and at the time in which they spake in them. They were compelled to speak "with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Regarding this kind of inspiration, Paul says, "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the Spirit he speaketh mysteries." 1 Cor. xiv. 2. It is farther evident from this, that the man who was thus impelled by the Spirit to speak in an unknown tongue, did not understand aught of what he said, for had he done so, he could certainly have interpreted it in his own tongue, and thus made himself understood by others.

Such then were the different characters of the inspiration of the prophets. They were entirely subject to, and bound in the power of the Spirit. They spoke neither more nor less than what they were inspired by the Holy Ghost to utter. Therefore Peter says, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. i. 20, 21.

That these "holy men of God" could not resist the power of the Spirit when he bade them speak, is evident from many passages of Scripture. But we have a special illustration of it in the complaint which the persecuted prophet Jeremiah laid before God as recorded in chap. xx. verse 7 of his book. But, first of all, we must rescue that passage from a mis-translation; for the words rendered, "O Lord, thou hast *deceived* me, and I was deceived," mean nothing else than, "O Lord, thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded." Here Jeremiah refers to the intercourse which he had with God at the first invitation to assume the prophetic office. For when the Lord said to him, "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou earnest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations," i. 5, he was terrified, and replied,

"Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak; for I am a child." Then the Lord began to persuade him, saying—"Say not, I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak." (See the following verses.) Thus the Lord persuaded him, and so he entered on the prophetic office. But when bitter persecution arose against him, and he became the mark at which the enemies of God shot their sharp arrows, he said, "O Lord, thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded: thou art stronger than I, therefore thou hast prevailed; now am I in derision daily—every one mocketh me. For since I began to speak aloud, I cried against violence and robbery; but the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any longer in his name; but his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." xx. 7—9.

Thus, then, it is evident, that when the prophet was once consecrated to his holy office, he became a *passive instrument* in the hand of the Spirit, and could by no means refrain from speaking when he was so commanded. Even when, because of the opposition of the powers of this world, and because of the persecution and suffering, both physical and mental, which the prophet endured, he had resolved to speak no more in Jehovah's name, his resolution was vain. In this matter he was not master of his own will, and the power working so mightily within him he found to be resistless. The fire of the Spirit once kindled, was kept up by every succeeding message from on high; and as the holy fuel of Jehovah's word accumulated within, the fire burst forth into inextinguishable flame. In the prophet's own emphatic language, "the word was in his heart as a burning fire shut up even in his bones." Therefore he was wearied with forbearing, and could not stay.

From all that has been said, we can easily understand how the prophets oftentimes speak in the name of God, and utter many predictions, without directly making use of that name as their authority, as they do on other occasions. For example, Isaiah, at the beginning of the forty-third chapter of his book, says, "But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob;" and then proceeds to address Israel in the name of that God who is thus introduced. In like manner, in chap. xliv., "Yet now hear, O Jacob, my servant," &c. "Thus saith the Lord that made thee." But in the third verse of chap. xlv. we read, "Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob," without mention of, "Thus saith the Lord." Still, we are persuaded from internal evidence, that throughout the whole chapter Jehovah must be the speaker. And so chapter xlviii. begins thus, "Hear ye this, O house of Jacob;" and from the ninth verse to the end of the chapter we see that Jehovah alone must be the speaker in the whole chapter. In other places again we find the prophet speaking in the name of a coming Messiah, though he does not so much as mention his name; as in chap. xlix., "Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far;" and in the sixth verse we see clearly that Messiah must be the speaker in that chapter throughout. To Messiah alone could Jehovah the Father say, "That thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." Chap. lxi. is to the same purpose. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me," &c. In this, as in many other passages of the same kind, Messiah alone must be regarded as the speaker, although the prophet does not directly mention it. The man of God spake

as he was moved by the Spirit ; and it remains for us to learn from the character of the prophecy, from the context, and from internal evidence, what person must have been specially concerned therein. When such person is figuratively or typically represented, it must be our study to ascertain who was the type and who the Anti-type, who was the figure and who the Substance. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Rev. xix. 1.

DAVID'S CALL AND INSPIRATION FOR COMPOSING THE PSALMS.

All that has been advanced regarding inspiration and prophecy in general, we now proceed to apply to the Psalms of David in particular. That David occupied an eminent place among the "holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, cannot be disputed. The title of the Book of Psalms to equal inspiration with all other parts of the sacred volume will be acknowledged by all who believe the testimony of Paul, that "*all Scripture* is given by inspiration of God," in which, doubtless, the Psalms are included. Repeatedly does the New Testament bear witness that the Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of David. But, after due examination, we find, that, besides the native beauty which characterizes the sacred volume as a compact and perfect revelation from God, there exist a special sublimity and grandeur in the book of Zion's songs, which make it shine forth, and excel all other portions of the Old Testament Scriptures. In it we find, as it were, all the branches of revelation ingrafted—the plans and purposes of the Almighty, from the beginning to the consummation of all things, concentrated—and the works of omnipotence, in creation, providence, and redemption, set forth in surpassing eloquence, and in strains of the highest devotion. Whilst in other portions of the inspired volume, the fallen child of Adam is informed of the provisions of heaven's free grace, and of the condescending love of God ; in the Book of Psalms, the child of Adam, delivered and redeemed, is taught by the Spirit how to string the instruments of his soul—how to join with the adoring myriads above—to raise the cup of salvation, and to praise and magnify Jehovah for all his benefits towards him. This is the glory in which the Book of Psalms excels.

Jehovah delights in adoration and praise. Having created all things for his own glory, all his works must praise him in all places of his dominion. In the regions of bliss innumerable companies of angels, seraphim and cherubim, and the souls of the just made perfect by the blood of the Lamb, are for ever employed in this holy and glorious service. "The morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy." When, in his infinite mercy and free grace, God revealed himself to the children of fallen Adam as reconciled in Jesus Christ, the Son of his love, he not only gave them an entire revelation of his plans, purposes, and will, but also put new songs into their mouths, gave them a perfect pattern of adoration and praise, and said, "Take with you words, and come before the Lord."

The son of Jesse was that "sweet psalmist of Israel" who converted all the treasures of revelation into practical adoration and spiritual praise. He was chosen by God to be the honoured instrument in the hand of the Holy Ghost of preparing a Psalmody for the spiritual as well as the literal Israel of God ; that in his sanctuary he might be praised "in psalms, and

hymns, and spiritual songs." That David might be fitted for that important and holy work, the Most High bestowed on him all the natural talents and graces of a singer and musician, as well as all the extraordinary powers of poetical eloquence and imagery. These qualifications were afterwards augmented, sanctified, and called into active exercise, by the additional afflatus of the Spirit of God, who came upon him as soon as he was anointed by the prophet Samuel to be king. Thus filled with and wrapt in the spirit of prophecy, the sacred poet stringed his harp, and poured forth Divine oracles, enriched with every beautiful flower of celestial song. The great design of these inspired effusions is, to show the mysteries of the plan of salvation in and through a persecuted, hated, despised, crucified, risen, and triumphant Saviour. David, who, as the father of Messiah according to the flesh, was best qualified to prefigure his Son, was brought, in the providence of God through a mysterious and overwhelming process. He was subjected to much misery, calamity, and terrible persecution, in order that, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, he might, from his own experience, write in strains of lamentation and woe regarding the Man of sorrows, whom in these sufferings he personated.

Hence a mysterious and wonderful analogy exists between his condition in this respect and that of the Messiah. David was brought into the burning furnace of affliction and trial—into dens and caves of the earth, whither the approach of his raging enemies drove him. In such circumstances his heart was broken within him—his soul was overwhelmed and crushed to the dust—and his courage failed; so that, being brought thus low, he could with perfect propriety exclaim: "The enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness as those that have been long dead. Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate." Ps. cxliii. 3, 4. In a similar state it was that the Holy Ghost took possession of the suffering type—covered him with his wings—carried him in spirit to a distant futurity—to Golgotha—and having nailed him to his Son's cross, and put words into his mouth, he exclaimed in the future language of the bleeding sufferer: "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me. They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." Ps. lxxix. 1, 2, 7, 9, 21. Again: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." Ps. xxii. 1, 7, 8, 16, 18.

But in such like extremity of distress, the rays of God's salvation often brightened the prospects of the sufferer, and confidence in the Divine faithfulness began to drop balm into his wounds, for he says, "But poor and wounded* as I am, thy salvation will strengthen me. That I might praise

* This is the literal meaning of the word in the Hebrew, not *needy*, but *wounded*.

the name of God in a song, and magnify him with thanksgivings." Ps. lxix. 29, 30. Again, "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Ps. xvi. 9, 10. David being thus influenced by the Spirit to speak as he gave him utterance, was sometimes lifted out of the pit of miry clay, and set upon a rock of exaltation and safety. In that happy situation he was directed by the Spirit to exclaim with his risen and triumphant Son: "O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast preserved me alive, that I should not go down to the pit." Ps. xxx. 3. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. Ye that fear the Lord, praise him, &c. . . . For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him he heard." Ps. xxii. 22—24. "Thou, who hast showed me great and sore troubles, wilt quicken me again, and bring me up again from the depths of the earth." Ps. lxxi. 20.

What vicissitudes! None of the prophets of old experienced such varied agonizing troubles and wonderful deliverances as David did, because the work assigned him was of a character quite peculiar. He was appointed to wrap Heaven's mysteries in the sublimest compositions—"golden apples in silver boxes;" and in him the sufferings and exaltation of the Messiah were personified. Who but a royal personage, surrounded by deadly enemies who thirsted for his blood, could be the figure of the suffering Immanuel? Who but David, the anointed king, could, in perfect confidence in the promises of the Most High, though in the face of the keenest opposition, exclaim at once concerning himself, and specially concerning the great David his Son: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. . . . Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: Jehovah hath said unto me, Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye lose the way," &c. Ps. ii. Who but David, we ask again, whose kingdom was so closely connected with that of Messiah his Son, the everlasting heir to his throne (and hence those who opposed David's throne opposed also the dominion of Jesus), could speak at once of the infallibility of his own promises and of those made by the Ancient of days to His only begotten Son? That the promises made to David regarding his kingdom were intimately connected with the everlasting kingdom of the Messiah, who is often called *David* by the prophets, may be clearly seen from the prophetic language of the eighty-ninth psalm: "Then thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant: with my holy oil have I anointed him. With whom my hand shall be established; mine arm also shall strengthen him. . . . He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my FIRST-BORN, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever,

and his throne as the days of heaven. . . . Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven—Selah"—(or, for ever, as Selah here signifies.)

In the above psalm we have ample proof that David, and David alone, was qualified naturally and spiritually, by revelation and by personal experience, by his greatness of soul, by his peculiar position as being the anointed king of Israel, by his eventful life, and, above all, by the blessed relation in which he stood to the Messiah—to be the composer of the songs of Zion; songs fitted alike for the sanctuary under the old economy and the new—songs of praise, and adoration, and triumph, and joy. In the Psalms, Jehovah's praise is celebrated in all his dispensations both in providence and in grace, from the beginning to the end of time.

Some of the Messianic psalms appeared to the Jew under the former dispensation obscure and incomprehensible; but this must be ascribed in a great measure to the pride which he felt in his temple services with their attendant shadows and ceremonies, and which spread, as it were, a cloud over his mind. But to the enlightened Christian no such obscurity appears. With shadows we have now nothing to do; they are dispersed by the radiance of gospel truth, and David's songs are found to be fraught with profound significance and spiritual instruction. Even the ambiguity in which some of the Messianic odes may still seem to be involved, detracts not from their excellence; for we have the testimony of the great apostle to the effect, that David, being a prophet and the progenitor of the Messiah, spake often of Jesus in his own person. We should endeavour carefully to distinguish between the figure and the substance to ascertain what may apply to the type, and what to the Antitype. And if, after all, any one should still maintain that it is impossible to arrive at any certainty in the matter, let him attribute his inability to do so to his own imperfect acquaintance with the spirit and style of these sacred compositions, but let him beware of impeaching the wisdom of the Holy Ghost. Jehovah has, in his mercy and grace, provided a complete and glorious Psalmody for his children, that they may praise him in the language of the Holy Ghost and of angels, and who will dare to dispute its authority?

PART III.

THE SAVIOUR'S TESTIMONY TO THE PSALMS—DAVID'S CHARACTER VINDICATED—
DAVID "A MAN ACCORDING TO JEHOVAH'S HEART"—THE VALUE OF THE
PSALMS UNDER THE NEW, AS UNDER THE OLD DISPENSATION—THE OBJECTION
TO SOME PSALMS, ERRONEOUSLY CALLED IMPRECATORY, REMOVED, AND THE
PSALMS EXPLAINED.

There is a surpassing beauty and grandeur in the Spirit's productions by the mouth of David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel. This precious book of

Zion's songs was honoured by the Saviour above all the other books of the Old Testament Scriptures. Most of the references which he made in order to establish his claim to be the Messiah, were to the Psalms of David, who was honoured with higher and clearer views regarding Immanuel than any of the prophets of old. With the reign of David the sceptre of Judah was established; and, at the same time, in a certain sense, commenced the reign also of King Messiah. David, as the father and type of the Saviour, was called by God, "a man after mine own heart." David's kingdom was to be an everlasting kingdom in Jesus his promised Son; therefore the Messiah is often called *David* in the language of prophecy, "Israel shall serve the Lord, and David their king." Jer. xxx. 9. "Israel shall seek the Lord, and David their king, in the latter days." Hos. iii. 5. The angel that appeared to the Virgin Mary said regarding Jesus, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." Luke i. 32. "What think ye of Christ?" asked the Saviour of his faithless opponents, "whose son is he?" When they replied, "The son of David," Jesus put this question, "How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" Matt. xxii. 42--45. From the nature of this argument we may learn, first, that David spoke by the Spirit; secondly, that Jesus was his Son according to the flesh, but his Lord and his God after the Spirit (a powerful argument against Socinianism); and, thirdly, that David, in his reign, in his person, as well as in his spiritual character, was a type of Messiah his Son the spiritual David, whose dominion is to endure for ever, and in whom alone God's promises to David could be made Yea and Amen.

What in our days, alas! is made doubtful and questionable by the so-called rationalistic critics, was completely established even among the blinded Jews in the time of our Saviour. When Jesus approached Jerusalem, a great multitude exclaimed, "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest." Mark xi. 10. The apostles Paul and Peter argued with the Jews from the 16th Psalm, showing them that when David said, "Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption," he said it not concerning himself, but prophetically concerning Jesus, his Son and Antitype, who was to be the real David, Jehovah's well-beloved Son from all eternity, and the everlasting spiritual King of Israel. Acts ii. 25--31; xiii. 34--37. On both occasions no Jew opened his mouth to contradict the apostle's argument; for it was generally believed among them that David often spoke in the Psalms, though in his own person, concerning Messiah his Son.

In the above sense we can easily understand how David was "a man according to Jehovah's own heart." He was the beloved of God, and an eminent saint in Jesus Christ his spiritual Successor and his Son after the flesh, and whom the Father loved from all eternity. David's sin was grievous indeed; but were not his repentance and humiliation perfect and sufficient? The Holy One of Israel, who cannot look upon sin but with abhorrence, sent his messenger to the broken-hearted and repentant David, saying, "The Lord hath pardoned thy sin; thou shalt not die." 2 Sam. xii. 13. Thus, in the 32d Psalm, we hear the pardoned sinner exclaiming, in the language of a sanctified and triumphant saint, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the

man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Again, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid; I said I will confess my transgressions unto Jehovah; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." There is therefore no room for cavil with respect to David's personal character, nor is there any impropriety in the expression, that David was "a man according to God's own heart." He was an eminent saint in Jesus Christ, in whom his sin was completely pardoned, and his privileges were many, great, and invaluable.

We are thus constrained to examine closely the too common opinion—that "only as a king David was a man after God's own heart, inasmuch as he was faithful in destroying the enemies of God, and in fulfilling his messages, which Saul his predecessor did not." This, we maintain, is a weak and groundless opinion, based on a one-sided view of David's real character. Those who hold this opinion look at the enormity of his sin, but lose sight of the pardoning power of a merciful God. Men ought to beware of appearing to be more righteous than the Holy One of Israel, more scrupulous than He in whose eyes the heavens are not pure.

But let us examine this opinion, and try whether it will stand the test. It is contradicted in the holy Scriptures thirteen times, by the express declarations of the Most High himself, wherein David is acknowledged to have been not merely an obedient king, but also an eminent saint. In 1 Kings iii. 14 the Lord said to Solomon, "And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days." Again, in chap. ix. 4, 5, "And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, . . . and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments; then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom for ever, as I promised to David thy father." Now, let any Hebrew scholar examine carefully the meaning of the words חֹק (Chok), מִשְׁפָּט (Mishpat), מִצְוָה (Mitzvah), and he will find, that they do not only indicate that David obeyed God as a king in swaying the sword over the head of his enemies, but that Jehovah called him a *saint*, who obeyed *commandments, statutes, and judgments*, and served him with integrity and uprightness all the days of his life. When David sinned as a man, he repented as a saint, and God, who alone had to deal in this matter, fully pardoned him, which ought surely to satisfy us. In the 11th chapter of the first Book of Kings, David is brought forward as a pattern of saints not fewer than ten times; and in the thirty-fourth verse especially, it is said, "For David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes." And in the 15th chapter of the same book it is testified (verses 3—5), that, except in the matter of Uriah, David did that which was right and pleasant in the eyes of the Lord—that his heart was perfect with Jehovah his God, and that he turned not aside from the commandments of the Lord all the days of his life. Such precious testimonies as these to the character of David are often repeated, and again and again mention is made of his greatness in piety and devotion.

We reject the opinion, therefore, which restricts the phrase, "a man after mine own heart," to David's character as a king. Agreeably to the varied testimonies and declarations of the Spirit of God, we must regard him as an eminent saint—as one whose heart was perfect with his God—as

the sweet psalmist of Israel—as the highly honoured and privileged father of the Messiah, the Prince of life and glory; and being all this, he could with perfect propriety be called “a man after mine own heart.”

The blessed relation in which David stood to the Messiah contributed largely to the beauty and splendour of the Psalms. Because David, as a prophet, and as the father of the Messiah, spake in the Spirit of the great David in his own person, Jesus when in the flesh made frequent allusion to the predictions found in these sacred songs, repeated them when in trouble, sung them with his disciples at his table, and verified their predictions even when hanging on the cross. He said, “I thirst,” that a psalm might be fulfilled. John xix. 28. “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” was once the exclamation of the afflicted David, but was now the bitter complaint of the Man of sorrows when in the pangs of death. His last words were, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” Luke xxiii. 46; Ps. xxxi. 5. Thus our Saviour expired with psalms on his lips. O what a recommendation of these glorious songs is here! On how precious a foundation does their authority rest! With what reverential and devotional feelings should Christians regard them!

These sacred songs were of invaluable service to the Church both under the former and the present dispensation. They added splendour and solemnity to the temple services. Their sound filled the sanctuary, while the smoke of the burnt-offering ascended on high as a sweet-smelling savour to Jehovah-Zebaoth. Morning and evening, bands of Levites celebrated the praises of the King of glory in these celestial songs, to the sweet music of their instruments. They filled the tabernacles of Jacob, diffused rest and peace through the dwelling places of God’s children, and communicated his secrets to the congregations of the saints of Israel. Three times a year, as the tribes from every quarter of Palestine repaired to Zion, the holy mountain of Jehovah’s residence, to worship there, these songs resounded through the land. The solemn echoes filled every valley, and were returned from every hill. With psalms in their mouths the happy pilgrims entered the city of the living God, filling the streets and the broad places thereof with sweet melodies and songs of praise. Thus did the Hebrew church, in her days of spiritual prosperity and strength, rival the heavenly hosts with these sacred treasures of David.

This example was followed by the Christian Church from the beginning of her existence. Knowing that her glorious Head lived and died with psalms on his lips, her members laid them up in their memories. Thus Zion’s songs became the highest and dearest treasure of the christian—the sweet companion of the lonely pilgrim—the friend and councillor of the widow and the fatherless—the exhaustless store of the poor and needy—the stronghold of the prisoner of hope—the comforter of the afflicted and persecuted—the healing balm of the spiritually-wounded—the best consolation of the broken-hearted—the support of martyrs—the gentle physician at the bed of disease and pain—and the motto of the dying soldier under the banner of Jesus, the slain and risen Lamb of God.

We come now to advert to a very peculiar, and no less grievous objection brought against some of the Psalms—and the more so, that it is made by those who profess to believe in the inspiration of Scripture, and consequently who are followers of Jesus who vindicated their authority both in his life and at his death. The objection is, “That some Psalms contain dreadful curses against enemies, and therefore they are contrary to the

spirit of the gospel, which teaches us to pardon our enemies, and to pray for them." Now, our conviction is, that such cavilling at the word of God savours of a spirit of unbelief, and is dangerous in its tendency, and must therefore be condemned and banished from every Christian mind. Observe, Christian reader, first of all, in how dangerous a position such men place themselves. They must either call in question the inspiration of that book altogether, a book which was so often quoted and confirmed by Christ and his apostles; or, if they admit its inspiration, their position becomes still worse, for, in that case, their objection must be directed against the Spirit of God. As most of the objectors deny their identity with the first class, while they still cleave to their objection, we would ask them the following questions: Is the Holy Spirit, by whom David spoke, changeable? Was he of one mind when he dictated the Old Testament, and of a different mind when he dictated the New? In the Psalms does he not reveal to us gospel treasures? Does he not breathe the most ardent love and tender sympathy towards fallen man? Does he not therein teach us how we may spend a holy, devoted, happy life in God's sanctuary, and how we may enjoy blessed communion with him there? Does he not command us in the Psalms as well as in the gospel to teach transgressors God's ways, that they may return to him and live? Does He not command us to pray and wait for the happy time when every soul shall bless the Lord, when every knee shall bow and tongue confess, when wickedness shall shut her mouth and sin be no more found, and when Jehovah's glory shall fill the earth and his name be praised in all places of his dominion? Can it be possible then for that Spirit to be contrary to the Spirit of the gospel? Can eternal benevolence and love break forth in passion and breathe cruelty?

But observe, in the second place, that from the two principal Psalms in which most of the (erroneously styled) imprecations and curses are to be found, quotations are made in the New Testament scriptures. "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. . . . For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and, his bishoprick (or office) let another take." Acts i. 16—20. Again, "And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway." Rom. xi. 9, 10.

Now, let any unprejudiced and spiritually-minded man examine both these Psalms again, and he will not fail to perceive (even without New Testament confirmation) that they contain no private curses against David's private adversaries. Could ever David have said concerning himself, "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" (Psal. lxxix. 21)? Are we not told in the gospel, that this passage was fulfilled in the Messiah, when on the cross vinegar and gall were presented to him? "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." John xix. 28. Does David speak of himself or of his personal enemies, when in Psalm cix. 25, he says, "I became also a reproach unto them; when they looked upon me they shook their heads?" Was not this, like many other Psalms, fulfilled in Christ? "And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads." Matt. xxvii. 39. We see then, from what has been advanced, that it cannot for a moment be supposed that David in these two

Psalms referred to his private enemies. On the contrary, it is evident from the best testimony, that they were written regarding Judas, and other foes, not of David personally, but of God, of Christ, and of the Church. Moreover, do we not learn from quotations in the New Testament, that it was not David, but the Holy Ghost by his mouth, who pronounced these maledictions, which God, in righteous judgment, has already executed, and will yet execute, on the enemies of Christ and his Church? Nor can it be doubted that these, as well as all other Psalms of like import, were given to the Church in order that the Most High might be adored in the dispensations of his justice as well as of his mercy; for he is as faithful in executing his awful threatenings as in fulfilling his gracious promises; and although mercy be his delightful attribute, yet it is always exercised in perfect harmony with his spotless holiness.

We now ask those who, from a false sympathy and tenderness, would presume to be more just than God: Are these Psalms contrary to the spirit of the gospel, because they contain the oracles of the Holy One of Israel, in which his eternal abhorrence of all iniquity is proclaimed, and his righteous judgments against the wicked are denounced? Is not the Lamb of God represented in the gospel as in the Psalms, not only as loving righteousness, but as hating iniquity? What are the "woes" in the gospel pronounced by Christ against his enemies? Did he not speak the very language of David in the 109th Psalm, when he said, "But woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born." Mark xiv. 21. Will the objector shrink when he hears the Friend of sinners saying, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! . . . ye shall receive the greater damnation . . . ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? . . . That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar"? Matth. xxiii. Again, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! . . . it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Zidon at the day of judgment than for you. . . . And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell." Matth. xi. 21—23. Will he shrink when he hears the benevolent and philanthropic Paul saying, when filled with the Holy Ghost—"O, full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, . . . behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind," &c.? Acts xiii. 10, 11. Are not the armies of heaven and the host of apostles and prophets called on to praise and adore God when the awful punishments, spoken of in the Psalms, are inflicted on his and on his Church's enemies at last? Rev. xviii. 20. Will the objector refrain from joining the hosts of the redeemed in their song of triumph—"Halleluia, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God. For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand?" Rev. xix. 1, 2.

Now, we are persuaded that no one of sound enlightened mind will attempt to create a distinction between the judgments on the enemies of God predicted by David, and those predicted by Christ, and by his apostles Paul and John; all which represent Jehovah in his holy, true, and righteous character, although the former were certainly intended as sacred songs, in

which the Church should celebrate his praise in that character. To make mention, therefore, of these very judgments in a song of praise, is truly glorifying to the holiness and justice, the mercy and truth of Jehovah. Of such kind was the song of Moses and Israel at the Red Sea; of Deborah and Barak after the triumph which the Lord granted them over their oppressors. Of such kind also are those found in the Psalms; as are also the songs which Christ commands the Church triumphant to raise over the destruction of his and her enemies. Rev. xix. 1—7.*

O, that Christians would in this matter follow the example and reasonings of the man who was born blind. When the faithless and malicious Pharisees tried to persuade him that Jesus was a sinner, and consequently not sent by God—what was his answer? “Whether he be a sinner or no I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. . . . We know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.” John ix. 25—31. Here, then, Christians may have the surest guide. If David and other prophets and apostles did curse their enemies out of their own bitter feelings and individual hatred, then surely the Lord would not have heard them. But when we see that the righteous and merciful God literally fulfilled their imprecations, and brought the predicted punishments on the individuals concerned, we are constrained to acknowledge that they so acted by the will of God. What worm of the dust, therefore, would not tremble to call in question Jehovah’s doings!

Take for instance the case of the prophet Elisha, and the curse which he pronounced on the wicked, rebellious, and idolatrous children of Bethel, when they reviled and mocked him, saying, “Go up, thou bald head.” The prophet cursed them “in the name of the Lord;” and instantly two she-bears came forth out of the wood, and tare of them forty and two children. Now, to any one who should call in question the spirit by which the prophet was at that time actuated we would say, Let him try and imitate him if he can. Let him try and curse his enemies in the name of the Lord as Elisha did, and wait for the two she-bears till they come and execute his wish upon his enemies. But if he be conscious that it is not in his power, nor in the power of any man, to do the same, let him keep silence, and stand in awe that he sin not, and let him conclude, that it was not the will of the prophet to curse, but that he was actuated by a will higher than his own. Jehovah the Spirit said to him, “Curse,” and how could he resist? God commanded that the prophet should curse them in his name, in order to execute his righteous judgment on the children of wrath, and show to the rebel idolators of Bethel that he alone was God, and that his servants must be honoured. Moreover, was it Peter who pierced Ananias with the sword of his mouth, and sent Sapphira, his wife, suddenly to her husband’s silent grave? Or was it not rather the Spirit of God who discovered to Peter their deceit, and made him pronounce their righteous doom? In such

* An author on the Psalms, when speaking of the groundless objections made against those in question, very cogently remarks: “I say, when we hear of these things, must we not conclude, that that sympathy and tenderness for the human family which refuses to acquiesce in the righteous maledictions of the Psalms, pronounced by the Holy Ghost against the enemies of Christ, is itself contrary to the spirit of the New Testament? It is too refined a feeling to have place with the souls *under the altar* of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held, and who cried with a loud voice, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true dost thou not judge and avenge our blood upon them that dwell on the earth.’” (Gordon’s Design and Use of the Book of Psalms.)

wonderful ways it pleased the Most High to manifest the holiness and rectitude of his character, and who may say to him, What doest Thou? The goodness and mercy of God, as well as his righteous severity, endure for ever. His servants cursed not unless the Spirit said to them, "Curse." The imprecations uttered by the *holy men of God* were oracles of the Spirit. According as the Spirit moved them they spake, and they only predicted by his dictation what was actually to be, sooner or later, the portion of those that forget God. Therefore saith Jehovah's Wisdom: "All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge. Prov. viii. 8, 9.

PART IV.

THE DIVISION OF THE PSALMS INTO FIVE BOOKS AMONG THE JEWS—ARRANGEMENT OF PSALMS ACCORDING TO THE TIMES WHEN THEY WERE COMPOSED AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH DAVID WAS—DIFFERENT AUTHORS OF THE PSALMS—REMARKS ON THE WORD "SELAH"—REMARKS ON THE DEDICATORY WORD לַמְנַצֵּחַ (LAMNATZEACH), COMMONLY RENDERED, "TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN."

Among the Jews the Psalms are divided into five books or portions, each of which concludes with a kind of doxology. The first book extends from the 1st to the 41st Psalm inclusive, and closes with the words, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen." The second book begins with the 42d and ends with the 72d, in the following doxology, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: And let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen." To this an intimation is annexed, that with this psalm the prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended, which evidently shows that it was the last production of the sweet psalmist of Israel. David must have composed it on his death-bed, when Solomon his son was anointed king over Israel, and sat on the throne of his father. (But this will be largely treated of in its proper place.) The third book extends from the 73d to the 89th Psalm inclusive, and ends with the short doxology, "Blessed be Jehovah for evermore. Amen, and Amen." The fourth book begins with Psalm 90th; and closes with the 106th, the doxology of which is, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting; and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord." The fifth book begins with the 107th and runs to the 150th Psalm, which is a doxology altogether.*

* That this division of the Psalms into five books is a very ancient arrangement, and not, as some think, a rabbinical fiction of modern times, is, in the opinion of the author, placed beyond doubt, and that for the following reason:—He is well acquainted with very ancient manuscripts and literature in the possession of a Hebrew family, which has nothing in common with the European Jews and their rabbies; and in these manuscripts the same division

The reason why the Psalms have been thus divided may be ascribed to the different collections of them which Ezra found in the hands of different individuals. During the terrible convulsions and destruction and captivity which Jerusalem and her children were subjected to under Nebuchadnezzar and his generals, the principal manuscripts, which were preserved in the temple, had all been consumed. Ezra had therefore to gather the holy scriptures from single manuscripts found in small collections in the hands of different persons who had providentially preserved them in the caves of the earth. The Psalms of David had always been divided among the different musicians of the temple. They were adapted to the various instruments used by the different bands of players, and to the various melodies arranged according to the time of composition, nor according to the circumstances in which the author might then be, but rather according to the kind of poetry they contained, and to the various melodies and instruments peculiar to the party to whom they were delivered.

We consequently find great confusion in the present arrangement of the Psalms; and this will be quite apparent from a comparison of some of their titles and contents, with the dates of the events referred to in them. Thus, for example, the 3d Psalm bears to have been composed by David when he fled from Absalom his son; while the 34th must have been written by him when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech, the former having thus apparently been composed more than thirty years after the latter. The 51st must have been written at least twenty-five years after the 52d, for the latter refers to Doeg when he accused David and the priests of Nob to Saul, while the former must have been composed about the twentieth year of his reign, being the well-known penitential psalm. So likewise the 54th, which was written when the Ziphims betrayed David's residence to Saul, must have been composed at least twenty-three years before the 51st, and upwards of thirty years before the 3d. The 142d also was composed when David was in the cave of Adullam, while the 3d was written nearly forty years after that; and so likewise the 18th was evidently written at a late period of David's life. And lastly, the 72d Psalm (as has been already remarked) was obviously the last prayer which he offered to the Most High, who had given him such glorious promises. It was written when Solomon was anointed and crowned king over Israel, and contains the ardent prayers of the dying monarch in behalf of his son, who was but a figure of the great Prince of Peace, Immanuel, who was to inherit David's throne for ever. David indeed offered that prayer for Solomon, but the Spirit who inspired it carried off the dying saint to the distant futurity, and made him pray for the greater than Solomon—for the Son of God, the Messiah, and for his everlasting reign on David's throne. As he felt that he must now depart, and that that prayer would be the last which he would pour into the bosom of his faithful God, he appends to the Psalm in which it is contained these words: "The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended."

The irregularity with respect to the arrangement of the Psalms, contri-

of the Psalms is found, though several are wanting which were composed after the destruction of the first temple. The Septuagint version has also this division, which clearly shows its antiquity. Nor are the closing doxologies less proof of that arrangement being very old.

butes largely to the seeming obscurity of many of them, especially of those whose titles do not indicate the occasion on which they were written, or those the titles of which have been lost. This was also the chief barrier in the way of the translators and expositors of the Psalms. Being ignorant of the occasion on which many of the most obscure Psalms were composed (and indeed they do not seem to have endeavoured to find it out)—of the individuals therein addressed or concerned—of the peculiar circumstances of the sacred author at the time of their composition—they failed to discover their proper meaning. It is therefore the chief design of the author in this volume to restore, as far as possible, every Psalm to its proper place. This will be done by diligently and carefully tracing, from the internal evidence of the Hebrew text, as well as from the application of David's history to the contents of the psalm, the exact time and occasion of its composition. The author by no means presumes to say, that he has found out the occasion on which all the Davidic psalms were written, or even that they can all be correctly ascertained; but he trusts that he is able to say, that since he began to search the Book of Psalms for himself—to direct his continuous and diligent inquiries in the manner before mentioned—the Lord has enabled him by these means to see many of the most seemingly obscure songs of Zion in quite a different light. A literal translation, otherwise very obscure and unmeaning (and which caused translators and expositors to insert supplements, often very unhappily), will appear bright and full of meaning, when we ascertain what David's peculiar circumstances and state of mind were at the time he composed the psalm—who were the individuals therein concerned—what its character and import—and what the purposes for which it was written.

The author has taken many opportunities of laying this method of treating the Psalms before ministers of the gospel in various parts of Scotland, together with some of its results, and of requesting their opinion concerning it; and he is happy to say that that opinion is highly favourable. He would therefore humbly hope, that by such means, and by a strictly literal translation of the Hebrew Text, much will be done, through divine aid, to restore many of these glorious songs to their native beauty and grandeur, and to find out their evangelical application and references. And in many instances, when the entire historical, poetical, and prophetic train of a psalm is apprehended, it will be found to throw light even upon the title of it, which otherwise would be unintelligible, but which—its right meaning being thus ascertained—will reflect light back again upon the subject of the psalm.

Starting from the above point, the perplexing question as to the authors of the Psalms must next form the subject of our investigation. This has been a matter of great controversy among commentators. Some of the ancient Jewish, as well as of the early Christian writers, have most injudiciously maintained that David himself was the author of the whole book, an opinion this which betrays an unfounded and not very critical judgment. But some modern critics go to the opposite extreme, and most absurdly maintain that all those Psalms which are entitled **לְאַסָּף** (Le Asaph),

לְהֵמָן (Le Heman), **לְבָנֵי קֹרַח** (Livney Korah), &c., do not mean "for Asaph," "for Heman," and "for the sons of Korah," i.e., that these names indicate the Temple musicians to whose divisions these psalms were

given to be sung and played by them ; but that the title indicates these as the names of the composers of them—and hence they understand such titles to mean—a song or psalm *of* or *to* Asaph, *of* or *to* Heman, and *of* or *to* the sons of Korah, *i.e.*, as the authors of them. That this opinion is erroneous we may learn, in the first place, from the title of the 39th psalm, where the word **לִידֻתָּן** (Li Duthun) must mean, “for Jeduthun,” as the musician, but not “of Jeduthun” as the author, for David is distinctly mentioned there as the author of that psalm : “A song for Jeduthun composed by David.” But farther, that this opinion is wrong, we may learn from the Book of Chronicles, where a full account is given of the three *head* divisions of the musical Levites, under their three leaders, or chief musicians, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan (the latter being the same with Jeduthun.) In 1st Chronicles xvi. 7, we read as follows, “Then on that day, (viz., when David brought the ark to Mount Zion,) David delivered first this psalm, to thank the Lord, into the hand of Asaph and his brethren.” Here then we have clearly mentioned the first time of David’s delivering some of his sacred songs into the hands of his chief musicians, that they might praise the Lord in the words which the Spirit inspired him to write. And must we not hence infer, that the Psalms entitled *Le Asaph*, *Le Heman*, or *Livney Korah*, were not composed by these persons, but that they were only the musicians to whom they were committed, in order that they might be sung in the sanctuary? David, their author, may have delivered them to adorn the temple services, and divided them among the heads of the musical bands, according to the various melodies and instruments to which they were best adapted. It remains therefore for us to judge from internal evidence, as well as from the songs themselves, whether they really were of David’s composition or not. And the author of this volume is persuaded, that by carefully pursuing the method before stated, many of these Psalms will be found to have been written by David, though they bear the names of the musicians by whom they were sung.

That additional weight may be given to the above argument, we invite the reader to compare attentively the 42d, the 63d, and the 84th Psalms together ; and by so doing, he must be convinced that they all proceeded from David’s pen, although two of them are entitled, “for the sons of Korah.” The 63d was written in the wilderness of Judea when David was suffering persecution under Saul. In it he expresses the ardent longings of his soul for Jehovah’s presence in his sanctuary ; “O God, thou art my God ; early will I seek thee : my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is ; to see thy power and thy glory so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.” Let us now turn to the 42d, and we shall see that it must have been composed by David on the other side of Jordan, when he fled from Absalom. The broken-hearted monarch had said to the Levites, when he left Jerusalem : “Carry back the ark of God into the city : if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee ; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.” 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26. But he soon longed for Jehovah’s sanctuary, and in the vehement desire of his soul he exclaimed : “As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God : when shall I come and appear before God?” That this Psalm was composed

beyond Jordan, is manifest from the sixth verse ; and we are persuaded that no one, possessed of the slightest knowledge of, and taste for; Hebrew poetry, can hesitate for a moment to conclude that the spirit, the style, the modes of expression, and the poetical figures employed, are the same in both Psalms, and consequently must have been written by the same individual. (The 43d Psalm being properly one with the 42d, is also included.) David, then, is the author of both ; and also of the 84th, which was evidently composed on the same occasion as the 42d, and in which the same strong desire for the comforts of God's sanctuary is expressed. " My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord : my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God." But as this Psalm is treated at large in its proper place, the reader is referred to the translation and exposition of it there. When, therefore, we compare these Psalms together, and see how the same spirit and subject pervade them all, we cannot fail to be convinced that they are the composition of one and the same person. For still farther satisfaction we may turn to the 4th and 5th verses of the 27th Psalm : " One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after ; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion : in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me ; he shall set me up upon a rock." All this must add force to the conviction, that in all these Psalms the soul and harp and pen of David were employed, though some of them are " for the sons of Korah," as the musicians to whose division they were adapted, that they might be sung by them accompanied by their instruments. Indeed, the more we reflect on these Psalms and their sublime harmony, the more do we see of the absurdity of the attempt to divide their authorship. To ascribe the composition of the 42d and 84th to the sons of Korah, is to maintain that they tried to imitate David their king in every point of composition. But we know that God's presence in his tabernacle was the chiefest desire of David's heart ; and whenever he was deprived of that holy enjoyment, whether by raging persecution or unnatural rebellion, he poured forth the same complaint, expressed the same anguish of soul because of such deprivation, and earnestly supplicated the Lord his God to restore him again to the scene of his highest joy, and the objects of his greatest affection. Moreover, when we recollect that David prepared a tabernacle for the ark of the covenant in his house, and that it remained so all the days of his life, we see clearly that he, and he alone, could use the language so peculiar to the Psalms in question.

But another difficulty has been started by some modern critics. They say that the date of many of the Psalms must be assigned to the period of the Babylonish captivity, and even to a period still later. This unhappy difficulty arises from certain peculiar expressions contained in such Psalms, in which complaint is made of the low state of the Hebrew nation ; in which Israel is represented as oppressed, devoured, and consumed by their enemies ; and in which prayers are made to the Lord that he would save his people, and turn the captivity of Israel. From such and similar expressions these critics maintain, that the Psalms in which they are found must be the compositions of a later age than that of David, and consequently must be assigned to the period of the Babylonish captivity. But while there can be no doubt that some Psalms, such as the 137th and others, must be acknowledged to be the productions of the prophets of a

later age than David's, still that furnishes no valid reason why all of them of the above description must be assigned to the period of the captivity. The title of the 51st Psalm shows that it was written by David when he was rebuked for his sin by the prophet Nathan. Few of the titles of the Psalms, indeed, contain so clear and exact an intimation of their contents, and of the time of their composition, as the 51st does. Inform a child of the peculiar condition in which David had at this time placed himself, and of the circumstances attending it, and then let this Psalm be read to him ; could the young auditor fail to comprehend the meaning of it ? to perceive the aggravation of the sin—the justice of the rebuke—the deep repentance and profound humility on account of it—and the ardent prayer for pardoning mercy ? And yet, will it be believed, that there are in our day *rationalistic* critics and Germanizing scholars, professed expounders of the word of God, who are bold to maintain that the 51st Psalm was not written by David at all ? Alas ! whither will such presumptuous errors lead ? What will become of the word of God in the hands of such blinded expositors ? But why do they go so far astray ? It is because of the following sentence : “ Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion ; build thou the walls of Jerusalem.” This, they say, could not have been penned by David, because the walls of Jerusalem had been already built, and Zion established in great splendour. Now, we would ask, Would there be any impropriety in the sovereign of this peaceful and prosperous country offering the prayer, “ O Lord, do good in thy good pleasure unto Britain ? ” Would these poor critics conclude that Britain must surely be in a miserable condition, because its sovereign prayed the Lord to do good to it ? Again, in reference to the other part of that verse—“ Build thou the walls of Jerusalem ”—we would ask them, Do they suppose that the author prays the Lord to build the walls of Jerusalem *literally*, with brick and mortar ? Do they not know what is said in another psalm, “ Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it : except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain ? ” Do they not hence perceive, that when man has built the strongest wall about a city, there remains still a building for the Lord to do, which alone will be able to withstand the storm of the elements, and the onset of the enemy ? Why do men love crooked things rather than those which are straight and excellent ? Why do they not, or rather, why will they not see, that David in these words prays the Lord to be a *wall of fire* around Jerusalem, to watch over her day and night, to preserve and protect her, and to establish her according to his promise ? O that such men would cease to intermeddle with what they are unwilling, or unable, from their ignorance of the Hebrew, to understand, and would learn to venerate more the things of Jehovah's sanctuary.

Let us now examine once more the condition of Israel as a nation during the early period of David's reign, and this, we trust, will shed much light on the subject under consideration. When David ascended the throne, the state of the nation was desperate. The terrible destruction of Shiloh must have taken place shortly before that time, and is described by the Psalmist in the following words : “ So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men ; and delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand. He gave his people over also unto the sword ; and was wroth with his inheritance. The fire consumed their young men, and their maidens were not spared. Their priests fell by the sword ; and their widows made no lamentation.” Ps. lxxviii. 60—64.

Such were the calamities which accompanied the destruction of Shiloh ; and we learn that the very name *Shiloh* became an example of terror in future ages. Jer. xxvi. 6, 9. In Saul's last and fatal battle the destruction of Israel was very great, and their deadly enemies did not lose the opportunity of improving their victory ; for we are told, that " when the men of Israel that were on the other side of Jordan saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities and fled, and the Philistines came and dwelt in them." 1 Sam. xxxi. 7. So miserable was the condition of Israel at that time, and so entirely were the Philistines their masters ! And we cannot doubt, but that thousands of them, who were taken captive in these disastrous wars, were sold as slaves into distant countries. In these deplorable circumstances, David ascended the throne of Judah first, and then of all Israel. Therefore we hear, that when David brought the ark of the covenant to Mount Zion, and gave out for the first time a psalm of praise, triumph, and joy, to be sung by Asaph and his brethren, it closed in the following words, " Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together (evidently referring to the dispersed of Israel in slavery), and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks unto thy holy name, and glory in thy praise."* 1 Chron. xvi. 35. Where now is the impropriety in the expression of David in the 51st Psalm, " Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion : build thou the walls of Jerusalem ?" where the impropriety, if in other Psalms, though composed by David, the low condition of Israel be complained of, and prayers offered for their restoration ? Indeed, even after all the victories which David achieved, the glory of Zion and the entire fortification of Jerusalem were only completed under Solomon his son. David was surrounded with bitter and deadly foes, and was engaged in war almost all his life. It was only towards the close of his earthly pilgrimage that peace was procured for Israel. When the Lord saved Israel from all their enemies by the hand of David—when Zion was built up in beauty and splendour—when the captive Israelites returned to Palestine from their state of slavery under the heathen kings, sent by them as gifts to King David, Israel, as a nation, had reason enough to lift up their voice in praise and thanksgiving to the God of their salvation, and to exclaim : " When Jehovah turned again the captivity of Zion,† we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing ; then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them," &c. Ps. cxxvi. 1, 2. This psalm can by no means be applicable to the return of Israel from the Babylonish captivity, as some imagine, for then they returned in comparative poverty and misery. The captives who accompanied Ezra the scribe did not return with singing and shouting on their journey, but with fear and trembling, with fasting and humiliation, and with supplication to God for protection from their enemies on the way. Ezra viii. 21—23. Even when

* Though these two verses, along with Psalm cvi., to which they belong, were composed by David when himself an exile in Philistia. See our introduction to Ps. cv. and cvi. In this book Ps. xxxvii. and xxxviii.

† But the words שׁוּב (Shuv) and שְׁבוּתָהּ (Shevuth), so often rendered " to turn the captivity," often mean nothing else but " to redress the affliction," or " to allay the disturbances," i.e. to restore to quietness and tranquillity the disturbed, dispersed, and oppressed people of Israel and their country. The tumults and bloodshed under Saul's government ceased completely under the reign of David. (See the last verses of Psalms xiv. and liii. and our exposition there.)

in Jerusalem, and enjoying the good-will of the Persian monarch, we learn from Nehemiah in how miserable a condition they were—how they were surrounded by bitter and dangerous foes, and had to build the wall with the sword in their hand. Hence the language of Nehemiah, "Hear, O our God, for we are despised." Neh. iv. 4. Again, "Behold, we are servants this day; and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers, to eat the fruit thereof, and the good thereof, behold! we are servants in it." ix. 36. From these considerations, the opinion must be erroneous which would apply to such a disastrous time the triumphant expressions, "Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them." Surely the heathen nations that laughed them to scorn, "and conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to make it desolate" (Neh. iv. 8), would not have exclaimed, when they saw the return of these poor captives, "The Lord hath done great things for them." But we cannot enlarge farther on this subject here, as it will come to be more fully considered in its proper place.

Meanwhile we conclude with two short remarks: first, we are satisfied from ample authority, that the Songs of Degrees were complete in number during the whole period of the first temple, and that no addition was subsequently made. But this part of the subject will also be treated more at length elsewhere. Secondly, we maintain, that the last two verses of the 126th Psalm can apply to none other than to David, by whom it was composed. He indeed did sow in tears—he began his reign in the midst of difficulties and disasters; but the mighty God of Israel subdued his enemies before him, and brought back the dispersed to Jerusalem with joy; and the trembling heathen nations, seeing the great change that had been effected in so comparatively brief a period, and that Israel, instead of being still a crushed, afflicted, and enslaved people, had become the terror of the East, said, "The Lord hath done great things for them." When David, at the eve of his eventful reign, saw himself surrounded by the princes and elders of Israel—when he surveyed the fruits of his labours, and the vast treasures of gold and silver and precious stones, which he had gathered from the spoil of the heathen, and consecrated to the building of Jehovah's sanctuary—and when he contrasted the peace and prosperity which Israel then enjoyed with their miserable and desperate condition when he assumed the reins of government, he had reason to exclaim, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." He was wont to go forth weeping when he bare the seed-basket (referring to himself when he first went out to battle with the arrows in his quiver, and wept and prayed the Lord for help); he came again with joy when bringing his sheaves (*i. e.*, the spoils of his enemies.) The 18th Psalm is the best illustration of what has been said. In it we see how David often went forth to battle, sowing his seed with fear and trembling, with sighs and tears, but returned in triumph, carrying an abundant harvest with him to Jerusalem.

GENERAL EXPLANATION OF THE WORD סֵלָה, SELAH.

The word *Selah* is found upwards of seventy times in the book of Psalms, and, with a few exceptions, is placed at the end of a sentence or paragraph. Its signification is very comprehensive, and wherever it oc-

curs, it serves a two-fold purpose. And even because of its comprehensiveness of meaning and its double service, it was chosen by David as a motto to be placed in his poems. The root from which this word is derived is סָלַח (Sol), which means "to heap up," "to raise up," *i.e.*, to form a high elevation by heaping together many things one upon another, as, for example, heaps formed of many sheaves of corn by laying them one upon another (see Jer. l. 26); or as a highway formed by heaping up the earth (see Isa. lvii. 14, lxii. 10.) Hence comes מְסִלָּה (Mesilah), "a highway," cast up, or heaped up, as in the passage last referred to, סָלַח סָלַח הַמְּסִלָּה (Solu, Solu Hamsilah), "heap up, heap up the highway." Many derivative words are formed from the same root, some of which are metaphorically used to denote "elevation," "exaltation," a raising up, a lifting up (compare Judg. v. 20; 2 Chron. ix. 11; Jer. xviii. 15; Prov. iv. 8, xv. 13; Exod. ix. 17); and many other figurative meanings have been attached to them, which it would be out of place to treat of here. Hence the word *Selah* was adopted to signify, in the first place, "continually," or "for ever," or "always," which is a figure taken from the root signifying, as above, a "heaping up," by accumulating any substances—so time is heaped upon time, which is elevated by its continuance. This figurative meaning "continually," "for ever," "always," the word *Selah* retains throughout the Psalms, and is essential as belonging to the text wherever it occurs. The latter indeed may sometimes be understood without it, but it is deprived thereby of much of its emphasis. This will be abundantly evident in our translation of the text; but we may here give a few examples from the current translation, as illustrative of our remark: "I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. *Selah*" (continually or always). "Salvation *belongeth* unto the Lord; thy blessing is upon thy people. *Selah*" (continually). Ps. iii. 4, 8. "O ye sons of men, how long will ye . . . seek after leasing? *Selah*" (continually). Ps. iv. 2. "And lay mine honour in the dust. *Selah*" (for ever). vii. 5. "And accept thy burnt-sacrifice. *Selah*" (always). xx. 3. "He is the King of glory. *Selah*" (for ever). xxiv. 10. "My moisture is turned into the drought of summer. *Selah*" (continually). "And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. *Selah*" (always). "Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. *Selah*" (continually). xxxii. 4, 5, 7. "For God is judge *himself*. *Selah*" (for ever). l. 6. (The word "himself," in this passage, is not in the text.) "I will trust in the covert of thy wings. *Selah*" (for ever, or continually). lxi. 4. "They bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. *Selah*" (continually, or always). "God is a refuge for us. *Selah*" (for ever). lxii. 4, 8. "They shall sing to thy name. *Selah*" (continually). "Let not the rebellious exalt themselves. *Selah*" (continually). lxvi. 4, 7. "And my spirit was overwhelmed. *Selah*" (continually). "Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? *Selah*" (for ever). lxxvii. 3, 9. These are some instances in which the reader may discover that the word *Selah* is essential to the text—that without it, in short, the verse is not entire, and the meaning is incomplete.

But this is not the only service which this word renders in the Psalms of David; it denotes also a musical pause at the close of the sentences where it is inserted. The Psalms were divided among David's head musicians, Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun, or Ethan, who had large bands of musicians

under them, and these again were divided into twenty-four smaller bands or wards which had their services distributed amongst themselves according to the time assigned to them. Among these divisions were some vocal musicians, and others who played on various instruments, such as harps, lutes, cymbals, and many sorts of stringed instruments. The head or chief musicians always opened the psalm vocally, along with those of their bands who were vocal secondaries; and then all players on instruments accompanied the songs of their brethren with the sweet tunes of their instruments. The singers had also cymbals in their hands, which, however, they never employed while they were singing; but when they arrived at the close of the sentence, or paragraph, which ended with *Selah* (which signifies also an "elevation," or raising of the tune), the singers suspended their vocal music, and began to use the loud cymbals which they held in their hands. Thus they continued for a while until they had been fairly rested; after which the head musician made a signal with his hand, that all sounds should cease till he began the second sentence. This arrangement was of great importance to the ten thousands of Israel who could not all get within the temple on festival occasions, but were obliged to stand without in the court of the house; for when the chief musician began the psalm, they could thus distinctly hear which one it was. When the singers sang the sentence, they could also catch the words, for they were uttered to the music, as is the case in our churches; and although the soft instruments were all employed, they were not thereby prevented from understanding which portion they were at. And when the *Selah* was come to, even the people that were farthest removed heard distinctly the solemn raising of the tune unaccompanied with words, and composed themselves to silence, waiting thus the commencement of the next sentence. This will be particularly explained when we come to the Psalms given out by David at the bringing of the ark to Mount Zion, such as the 24th, &c., to the Psalms sung before the ark when it was placed there with great solemnity, such as the 47th, &c., and those which were sung when the great revelation was made to David by the prophet Nathan, as the 68th, &c.

GENERAL EXPLANATION OF THE WORD לְמַנְצֵחַ (LAMNATZEACH) RENDERED, "TO THE CHIEF MUSICIAN."

We need not go far to show that the above rendering of the word לְמַנְצֵחַ (Lamnatzeach) is incorrect, and that it cannot be intended to designate, that the Psalm, at the head of which it appears, was given to the chief musician to be performed by him, for it occurs several times in connection with the words לְבָנֵי קֹרַח (Livney Korah), "for the sons of Korah." Now, if the Psalm was given to the chief musician, how came it to be also given to the children of Korah? Should any one say, that it was given to the chief musician who was over the musical sons of Korah, then it would be "unto Heman," for that chief musician was a Korahite. (See 1 Chron. vi. 18—23.) But the fact is, that the Korahites were always divided under one or other of the chief musicians, whether Heman, Asaph, or Jeduthun, as they were the principal instrumental musicians. (See our exposition of the title of Psalm lxxxviii., also of that of Psalm lxxvii.) The title of Psalm xxxix., besides

the word "Lamnatzeach," has also "Liduthun," "for Jeduthun;" now Jeduthun being himself the chief musician, where is the use in repeating it, and saying, "To the chief musician, to Jeduthun?" If this was done in order to point out which of the three chief musicians this Psalm was given to, why was not the same thing done always? But it is absurd to think that while so many Psalms have been inscribed, To the chief musician, it should not be stated for which of them it was intended, thus leaving them, as it were, to argue the matter among themselves: as if Heman had said, It was intended for me; and Asaph, It was intended for me; and Jeduthun, that it was meant for neither of them, but for him. It cannot be maintained that it was intended to designate them all, for then the word would have been put in the plural, "Lamnatzchim," "For the chief musicians," and not in the singular. Besides the Book of Psalms, in which the word "Lamnatzeach" appears upwards of fifty times in the superscriptions, we also find it at the end of the book of the prophet Habakkuk, who closes his magnificent song with the words לַמְנִצֵּחַ

בְּיָנִינוּתִי (Lamnatzeach Binginothay), which are rendered, "To the chief singer on my stringed instruments." The idea that the poor prophet Habakkuk had musicians of his own with stringed instruments, and with a chief musician over them, is too ridiculous to be entertained.

The true signification of the word "Lamnatzeach" is very comprehensive, and is still more sublime from the way in which it is applied in the Psalms. It is derived from the root נָצַח (Netzach), which means "continuing" or "persevering;" also figuratively, "superiority," "victory," or even "excellency." Hence מְנַצֵּחַ (Menatzeach) is used in the primary sense to denote, "One who promotes the continuance of a thing, or the perseverance therein," as an overseer of workmen of any kind, inasmuch as he promotes the continuance of the work by causing the workmen to persevere. But if the word be taken in a wider sense, it leads back to an overseer, who is but One, and who alone promotes the perseverance in and the continuance of everything,—it denotes the First and Chief of all causes and events—the Giver of all things—the Promoter of all things—Him who enables us to begin a work, to persevere therein, and to finish it. Therefore when we find the particle לַ (La) prefixed to מְנַצֵּחַ (Menatzeach), it means, that something is dedicated "to the Chief Cause of events—to the Author and Finisher of all things"—to Him who is extolled in the praises and songs of his people. Wherever the word "Lamnatzeach" occurs in the superscription of a Psalm, it is to be understood as standing quite by itself, and as having nothing in common with the other parts of the title. The titles of the Psalm may describe the subject of it, the name of the author the occasion and time of composition, the instruments on which it was to be performed, and (as was often the case) the name of the musician to whose division it was given for this purpose, as "to Jeduthun," "to Heman," "to Asaph," "to the sons of Korah,"—but the "Lamnatzeach" has nothing in common with any of these, but is simply to be understood as designating the dedication of the song to the Most High God of Israel—to the Chief Cause of all events—to the Giver of all things—the Promoter of all things—for whom, and in whom, and to whom all things are, in time and eternity. Thus did David, when he began a sacred composition, dedicate it

to the Ancient of days, who by his Spirit enabled him to begin, to persevere, and to finish, and who is extolled and glorified by the praises of his children. Thus did Habakkuk close his sublime song, the last two words of which signify: This song is dedicated to the Chief Cause of all events, to Him who glories in my songs. The word נְגִינוֹת (Neginoth), usually rendered "stringed instruments," means literally, "songs," any kind of songs or melodies, whether national or sacred. Several of David's Psalms, like the song of Habakkuk, have the words "Lamnatzeach Bingenoth," which mean likewise, "To the Chief Cause of events, extolled by my songs of praise."

THE
HISTORY OF DAVID.

THE character of David is one of very deep and peculiar interest, and his inspired compositions have been the delight and comfort of the Church in all ages. The history of the man and these Psalms, as evolving themselves out of his history, may well be chosen as the subject of a Christian work to be offered to a Christian people.

Jesse, a descendant of Judah, and an elder of the tribe, had eight sons, of whom David was the youngest. He was born in Bethlehem of Judea, about 1085 years before the birth of Christ. Of his early and private life before the notable event of his consecration by Samuel, we are left in ignorance, and can only shape it out for ourselves in imagination. When first introduced to our notice (1 Sam. xvi.) he appears as a keeper of his father's flocks, fresh and ruddy from the pursuits of a pastoral life, as if ignorant of the world, and incapable of a thought beyond the duties of his class. But we soon begin to discover the traces of a noble disposition, a manly and daring character, and a temperament responding to the least touch of kindness or affront. His spirit of devotion, of a depth and fervour quite peculiar, was a thing beyond teaching, but in his mastery of the powers of music and poetry we are led to seek the evidence of a high and successful culture superadded to his genius. And such a culture, which the early display of the rare endowments of the youngest son and darling of the family so strongly demanded, would, if at all within reach, be bestowed. It is highly probable that, before being entrusted with the charge of his father's flocks, he attended for a number of years a school of the prophets in the neighbourhood, or in the city of Bethlehem itself. There he would be taught to know the Lord God of his fathers, to fear, love, and adore him with all the faculties of his mind and soul, to obey his law and walk in his statutes blamelessly, to sing of the majesty of his name in spiritual songs, and to sound aloud his praises on harp and psaltery, the use of which musical instruments was the badge of the pupils of the prophets. 1 Sam. x. 5; 2 Kings iii. 15. Having finished the course of education common at such schools, he returned to his father's inheritance, and entered upon the pursuits of a rural life, at that time followed alike by high and low, and in the discharge of the duties of a shepherd he spent his youth. In the green and quiet valleys of Judea, where he led and tended his flock, he enjoyed every facility for searching and prolonged meditation on the will and ways of God. There he exercised his poetical genius and perfected his skill in music, and, even while in this state of obscurity, his fame appears to have

spread widely in Judea, and his extraordinary gifts to have won for him many admirers, and drawn upon him the attention of many of his nation. 1 Sam. xvi. 18.

Saul, by his wickedness and disobedience, had brought upon himself the divine displeasure, so that when Jehovah had rejected him from being king over Israel, he called and delivered this message to Samuel the prophet. "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil, and go. I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided me a king among his sons." 1 Sam. xvi. 1. According to these divine directions the man of God arose and took his journey towards Bethlehem, that favoured spot which gave to Israel an ever-famous King David; and to a guilty world an ever-blessed Redeemer, Jesus Christ. After being affectionately saluted* by the elders of the city, the Nazarite prophet, as was often done in those days, proclaimed a sacrificial feast, and when all things were prepared, among the foremost of the consecrated guests, by a special invitation, appeared Jesse and his band of seven sons. Little knew the aged Jesse what a rich and glorious message from the Most High the prophet had brought to him and to his house! Nevertheless, one of the sons was absent, and the reason why David did not also make his appearance at the feast was simply because some one must have remained with the flock, and he being the youngest, the duty fell naturally to him. When the prophet lifted his eyes on Eliab, the eldest of the noble band of brothers, struck by his tall stature and majestic countenance, he concluded in his heart that "surely the Lord's anointed was before him." But the Lord soon corrected the mistake into which his servant had fallen through the deceitfulness of fair looks and outward advantages. "Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature, because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." In the same manner also was Samuel taught to decide regarding the other six sons of Jesse who passed in succession before him. He put them all aside with the saying, "The Lord hath not chosen these." A question was then put to Jesse as to whether all his children were present, when he replied, "There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep." The instant command of the prophet was, "Send and fetch him, for we will not sit down (or round the table) till he come hither." 1 Sam. xvi. 11. If the wise men of the East had reason to be surprised when their guiding star led them past all the palaces of Jerusalem to an humble cottage at Bethlehem, there to show them the Emmanuel, the spiritual "King of the Jews," no less must

* Affectionately saluted. In 1 Sam. xvi. 4, it is said in the common version, that the elders of the town *trembled* at his coming. This is an unhappy translation of the verb *וַיִּתְרַדְדוּ* (*Vayechredu*) which literally denotes the agitation and eager affection visible in their deportment at his coming. The same word is rendered twice by "careful" in 2 Kings iv. 13, and where it literally indicates the affectionate hurry and bustling carefulness of the Shunammite for the accommodation of Elisha. The word is twice distorted in Hosea xi. 10 and 11. "When he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west:" this rendering is perplexing, but becomes intelligible when simply rendered, "When he shall roar," *i.e.* call aloud for them, then the children shall hurry eagerly from the west, *i.e.* "They shall flutter quickly as a bird from the west." So verse 11 is no longer forced and unnatural when translated, "Yea they shall eagerly hurry as birds out of Egypt." The agreement of these renderings with the scope of the passage is obvious. So also the elders arose with an eagerness of affection to welcome the prophet with the usual salutation, "Peace accompany thy coming." So it should be rendered, 1 Sam. xxi. 1, "And Ahimelech made haste to meet David."

the prophet have been overcome with astonishment when he saw the seven elder sons of Jesse, who were mighty men of valour, passed by, and the choice of the omniscient God falling upon the youngest, a shepherd lad. With what an eager curiosity would Samuel await him as he was sent for and brought in from the field! Before long he was seen coming near where they stood, and this is the description given of him at the moment. "Now, he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon." But outward comeliness is not always to be suspected as a deceitful show. "And the Lord said, arise, anoint him, for this is he." xvi. 12.

This is he, the man according to Jehovah's own heart. This is he who is soon to be the careful shepherd and the victorious king of Israel. This is he who shall build up and adorn Jerusalem, who shall restore the broken and ruined order of the priesthood, who shall establish the tabernacle on Mount Zion, who shall bring up hither with shoutings the ark of the covenant, and surround it with companies of musical Levites, who shall sing his inspired songs to the honour of the Most High, and advance his praise in the melodies of their stringed instruments. This is he who shall gather together from all sides and prepare the precious materials for the holy sanctuary to be built on Mount Moriah by his peaceful son. This is he who is to be the high progenitor of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, and in his person and history a type of the well-beloved Son of God.

The gentle and comely shepherd of Jesse's flock was at once anointed with the holy oil which the prophet Samuel poured on his head, and was thus consecrated to feed and guard Jacob, the chosen people of Jehovah, and Israel his inheritance. Nor did this consecration end in a mere sign of his election, but to inspire and prepare the youth for the approaching duties of his station, "the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward."

All this was done in secret, to escape the notice of Saul, who, if aware of the matter, would little have scrupled to take the life both of the prophet and of his newly-anointed rival. Samuel, therefore, went back instantly to his dwelling-place at Ramah, and David returned to the scene of his usual occupation of tending his sheep. Ignorant as was David's flock of the great change which had during his absence been wrought in their shepherd equally ignorant at that time was Israel, his future people, of the glorious destinies secured for them in the consecration of their shepherd king.

Now was the son of Jesse fully qualified to begin the composition of those sacred poems, in which he ultimately attained so great celebrity, and in which he excelled all the Scripture poets before or after him. Formerly possessed of all the natural endowments, and all the acquired skill of the musician and the poet, and having received now the additional afflatus of the Holy Spirit, we have reason to look for some glorious songs of adoration as among the first inspired productions of David. And there is no one of all the Psalms, so peculiarly fitted for being chosen as the firstling of the poetical flock, which he offered to God, as that beautiful, affectionate, and noble song, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Let us think of David in the midst of his native scenery as a shepherd, and we will find in it every requisite mark of its precedence of order among the Psalms, being evidently the offspring of a youthful imagination, and marking distinctly the position of danger in which he found himself

as the newly-anointed king of Israel.* In the green meadows of Judea he sat or walked beside his flock, with his eye following watchfully every one of his sheep, and his heart full of tenderness for each of his lambs. Excited by the message brought to him by the man of God, who anointed his head with the holy oil, an emblem of the Spirit, who descended upon him to expand his intellect and quicken his soul, he seizes the harp, never far distant from his hand, and lifting up his eye beaming with faith towards heaven, he sings—

PS. XXIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. I.

1. Jehovah is MY shepherd ; I shall not want.

David had lately been blessed with a glorious token and infallible earnest of the guardian care of the Ancient of Days, the Divine Shepherd of all the hosts of earth and heaven ! With a joy which must be felt to be understood, he reflects that he is now promised the favour and protection of a spiritual Shepherd, more loving and faithful and provident towards him than he has the will or power of showing himself towards his own sheep. What words could better express the overflowing fulness of his heart than the opening verse of this Psalm ! He also had a Shepherd, and that was Jehovah, in whose free grace and favour he had been chosen to all blessedness, called to the dignity of an anointed king, and enriched by his Spirit, the most expressive seal of Jehovah's sanctuary. Having such a Shepherd, so great and so bountiful, how could he ever be in want ?

2. In pastures of tender grass he shall make me lie down ;
By the quiet waters he shall lead me.

The imagery is entirely taken from the scene before his eyes, from the rich and well-watered district of which he was a native. There is also to be taken into account his feeling of attachment to his own flock, and the watchfulness with which he attended to their welfare. He was careful to lead them to the best pastures at his command, where their whole time

* David was anointed, says the common version, not incorrectly, "in the midst of his brethren." This does not go the length of asserting that it was in their presence, which could not be reconciled with their seeming ignorance afterwards of his destiny. The word descriptive of the situation is not נֶגֶד (Neged), as in Gen xxxi. 32. 37, but בֵּיתֵךְ (Hekerov), "in the close proximity" of his brethren. To have done it in the presence of so many would have been dangerous ; to have excited suspicion by taking him out into the field, equally dangerous. Josephus relates that Samuel "sat down to the feast, and placed the youth under him, and Jesse also and his other sons, after which he took oil in the presence of David, and anointed him, and whispered him in the ear, and acquainted him that God chose him to be their king." It is, however, more easily conceived that the prophet took him aside for a moment, not altogether out of the place where his brethren were assembled, but into some private recess of the house or grounds. That no witness of the ceremony was needed is evident from the case of Saul, who remained alone by the way, with the prophet who anointed him. 1 Sam ix. 27 ; x. 1.

David, again, must have been aware of the full meaning of the sign, even independently of the formula of words which always accompanied the sign. 2 Kings ix. 3. With a remarkable prudence he never afterwards fails in a becoming deference towards his superiors, and often speaks of himself in the usual oriental terms of self-abasement, but always acts as if with a consciousness of the high honour to which he was destined, and when he finds it acknowledged, he never denies it nor implies a denial. 1 Sam. xxiii. 17 and xxiv. 20.

would not be spent in grazing, but where they should be able, after being satisfied, to lie down and rest. He was also careful to lead them, not to a strong and rapid torrent, where they might be in danger of being carried off by the stream, but to a gently flowing brook, where they could step in safely, drink, and be refreshed, and return to the pasture. So also he expresses his own confidence in his Divine Shepherd, that he will lead him into pastures of spiritual ease and plenty, enrich him with all the promises of his Word and all the comforts of his Spirit, bless him with a peaceful conscience in the midst of all the dangers besetting him, guiding him by his counsels while on earth, and afterwards receiving him up into his glory.

3. My soul he will restore,
He will lead me in the path of righteousness
For the sake of his name.

This is another figure taken from the experience of his daily life. When a sheep goes aside by itself and begins to wander, the careful shepherd restores it to the flock, and leads it in the right way. The soul of David was now enlarged and quickened by the Spirit of God that rested on him and moved within him. Thus renewed, he was conscious of the Power that inspired him, that it was sufficient to restore his soul from every backsliding in sin, to bring him to a timely repentance, to lead him in the way of a holy obedience, and thus change him from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of God. And with what motive would the Lord do all this for an erring man? "For the sake of his name." Ah, this cannot be said of an earthly shepherd; for, after all his kindness and tenderness towards his flock, he serves his own personal and selfish ends. But it is impossible that Jehovah, the Divine Shepherd, can keep his flock in the prospect of any benefit to be derived to himself from them. The hungry he feeds; the thirsty he revives with water; the feeble and diseased he heals and strengthens; the pursued and the helpless he defends; the lost and wandering he restores, and he leads them all in the path of righteousness, and that for no other reason than "for the sake of his name." But what, and of what significance, is his name? His name is "Jehovah, Jehovah God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth." Exod. xxxiv. 6. But this name, it is known, belongs to Jehovah the Son, to the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, in whom alone the holy Father, "who is of purer eyes than to behold evil," can look upon his fallen and sinful children in mercy. These precious attributes were proclaimed before Moses by God the Father, not as a revelation of himself, but when, according to the desire of his servant, he taught him the Divine name and character of the covenant-Angel whom he promised to send along with him as his guide.* Now this Angel of the covenant, who often shows himself wonderfully in the Old Testament, is no other than God the Son, and it is Jesus Christ alone who claims the title of the Shepherd of Israel. "I am the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." John x. 11. It is therefore Jesus Christ the Saviour

* The reader is here referred to the author's account of the Revelation made to Moses, when the Lord hid him in the cleft of the rock and made his glory to pass before him.—"The Christian Jew on the Old Testament Scriptures."

who is described by the inspired David, and in whom he reposes his confidence, when he exclaims, "Jehovah is my Shepherd. I shall not want. In pastures of tender grass he shall make me lie down." It is Christ alone who can say, "I am the Door, by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture." John x. 9. Jesus came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost—to restore the perishing sinner from death to life—to wash him from his sins in his blood, and present him pure and unblamable before the eyes of the Father. In him alone do we find a Divine Shepherd, with all these glorious attributes in the fullest exercise for our good. With an unwearied patience and long-suffering—with an abundance of goodness and truth—and with an almighty power to save to the uttermost, he came down into this world to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to the bound. (Isa. lxi. 1.

4. Yea, though I should walk through the valley of death-shade,
I shall fear no evil ; provided thou art with me :
Thy rod and thy staff they shall comfort me.

The Hebrew word צֶלְמַוֶּת (Tsalmaveth) compounded of צֶלַל (Tsel) shade, and מָוֶת (Maveth) death, is a word expressive of the thickest possible darkness. It calls up before our minds a most gloomy and horrid valley, attended with great danger both from wild beasts, which there crouch for their prey, and also from robbers, who retreat to such places to cover their deeds of wickedness. It also denotes, in a figurative sense, the clouds and shadows of trial and persecution and affliction, Ps. xlv. 19, cvii. 10—14 ; also the gloom of terror and dismay, Job xxiv. 17 ; also the misery and darkness of the soul, as in Isaiah ix. 2, we read of a people walking in darkness, and dwelling in the land of death-shade. The use of the figure may be traced to the following circumstance. The shepherds of Judea had often to lead their flocks away into the wilderness of their own district, or into the regions bordering on the Dead Sea. They were thus often compelled to traverse the most dreary and desolate vallies,—from their narrowness,—being mere ravines and chasms among the mountains, and where the thickness of the briars and thistles hanging over from the opposite sides, threw the path at the bottom into almost total darkness. The sheep, quite naturally, recoiled from entering into a passage so frightful, but were forced onwards by the rod in the hand of the shepherd. But little knew the trembling sheep that this very path, however terrific, would lead them through into a brighter region, into verdant pastures of quietness and plenty. David could not but foresee that he would traverse in his career many such dark vallies of danger and affliction, but at the same time the promised presence of God afforded him an all-sufficient consolation in the prospect. He had many evils to encounter, but *provided* the Great Presence went with him, there was none of them all able to overwhelm him with fear. Now, he states the advantages of having such a glorious Shepherd to lead him. "Thy rod and thy staff they shall comfort me." The rod was employed by the shepherd in leading the sheep, and sometimes even in forcing them to enter into a path which they dreaded. This

is the feeling of David, that although flesh and blood were too weak not to shrink from a life of trial and persecution, such as his was in all likelihood to be, yet when granted the Divine Presence, he would rejoice in the very rod by which he was compelled into a gloomy path for his own final good.

But the Shepherd, when he guided the flock through a path of danger, had also a staff, strong and heavy, with which to defend it from ravenous beasts and from robbers. The Great Shepherd of David has not only a rod of correction for his erring or unwilling people, but also a mighty staff of Omnipotent power to break the jaws of his and their enemies. By the staff of God's grace is the Christian comforted in his pilgrimage through life. He is supported under all the pains and sorrows to which our fallen nature is subject, delivered from the terror of temptation, strengthened to overcome the world and the flesh, and encouraged to run with perseverance his course of obedience. Being the child of grace, there has been formed in his heart the hope of a glory to come, but the way thither lies through a doleful region, even the valley of the shadow of death. This is the dominion of the King of Terrors, into which he cannot throw even a momentary glance without dismay; but to guide him and guard him through its manifold dangers in peace, he has also a great, and wise, and living Shepherd, even our Lord Jesus Christ, whom the God of peace hath brought again from the dead. Let him only turn a believing eye to the Divine Forerunner, who has shown him the path of life, who has gone down before him into this dreaded valley as a conqueror, and who has appeared in the presence of God for him for ever, and even in death he will "fear no evil," he will be comforted over and above his dismay.

5. Thou shalt prepare before me a table,
In the presence of mine adversaries :
Thou hast anointed with oil mine head ;
O, my cup overflows.

It appears evident that David here makes an allusion to the mysterious providence of his Shepherd in not first removing Saul out of the way before anointing him as king of Israel. He therefore magnifies his goodness in providing for him and protecting him during the reign of the man who, along with his adherents, was soon likely to become his deadly enemy. The second clause of the verse has an evident reference to the clauses both preceding and succeeding it. The sequence of the thought seems to be as follows,—that since Jehovah had been so graciously pleased to anoint him as king, as it were even "in the presence of his adversaries,"* he would certainly not fail "to prepare before him a table" (a figurative representation of all the blessings of life), also "in their presence." He might often be in want and extremity, often pursued and overtaken by his enemies, but Jehovah would be his provider, and enrich him with a wonderful

* The word צָרָאִים (*Tsorerai*), in the text rendered "adversaries," may also mean "rivals." This is clearly its signification in Lev. xviii. 18, and should be translated "to be her rival." So it might be here rendered not without advantage, "a table in the presence of my rivals," i.e., Saul and his sons. (Comp. also 1 Sam. i. 6. where the word means also "rival.")

blessing, and save him with a great salvation, even in the very moment they looked upon him to destroy him. He would enable him to escape all their plots, defend him from all their attacks, and lead him on from strength to strength, until at last he should be established in peace on the throne from which they strove so malignantly to cut him off.

It is usual among commentators to interpret the third clause of this verse, "thou hast anointed with oil mine head," (erringly translated in the present tense), as a mere figure of joy and happiness. Yet surely this fails to explain the scope and tendency of the verse when taken as a whole. Whence these adversaries to so young a man, an humble shepherd, one beloved and admired by all? Wherefore so peculiar a description of the bounties of providence in his case as a table prepared for him "in their presence?" Any answer we can imagine to these questions is beset with doubts and difficulties. But let us look upon these words as the simple record of an event but lately happened, and the verse is found to be so expressive of his situation as at once to engage our sympathies, and in "the adversaries" we discover Saul and his associates watching to destroy him, and in the table prepared for him "in their presence," the special providence of God in supporting and defending him until their death. It was certainly as a sign of his royalty, a sign fitted to accompany the other royal sign of a sceptre, that David, as was said of his great Antitype, was "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows." Ps. xlv. 7. To an event so remarkable as his consecration in such circumstances, we would naturally look for very pointed allusions in the sacred poems collectively marked by his name, and it rather helps than hinders our understanding of the present Psalm to interpret this clause as one of them. For other notices of the same event we refer to Ps. lxxviii. 70, and to Ps. lxxxix. 20, where it is brought forward into broad and prominent view. Again, in a Psalm by its title confessedly his own, and written at an early stage of his career, when hiding from Saul in the wilderness of Judea, he predicts of his enemies that "they shall fall by the sword, but the king (himself) shall rejoice in God."—Ps. lxiii. 10, 11; see our exposition there. David had been anointed, and anointed as a king, a circumstance fitted to make a most powerful impression on a mind so sensitive, and this from its connection seems to be the thought which inspires his gratitude, when he rises to a climax and exclaims, "O my cup overflows!"

This is an image borrowed from the services of the Tabernacle. When the priest poured the drink-offering upon the altar, he always caused the cup in which the wine was measured to overflow, to denote the free and liberal disposition in which it was dedicated. The measure meted out by the priest to God was the measure meted out by God to David. After telling of the boundless goodness of the Lord, and of the certain fulfilment of his promises, he glances a moment at his consecration to so high a destiny, and suddenly bursts into an exclamation of surprise and delight. "O my cup overflows!" It is more than he could ever deserve, it is higher than his ambition could have soared, it is wonderful, it is heavenly, it is divine! But all this, however great, was only a beginning of greater mercies to come. David rejoiced in such a beginning, but looked forward and saw a long train of more noble, more glorious loving-kindnesses awaiting him in the future.

6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
 Throughout all the days of my life ;
 Then shall I rest in Jehovah's house
 For the whole extent of ages.

All the blessings of time are but foretastes and prelibations of the joys of eternity. There are green pastures and quiet waters of the Spirit to which we are sometimes led by our Shepherd for our consolation while on earth, but the rest that remaineth for the people of God is in heaven, in the spacious and numerous mansions of Jehovah's house, where he awaits to welcome his children as they escape away from all the troubles of the flesh, and enter into an inheritance of light undimmed by a shadow, and into a rest unbroken by the step of any adversary for ever.

The comprehensiveness no less than the simplicity of this inspired song of the young Judean shepherd, is noticeable by the most casual reader. Besides admiring its native beauty and richness of imagery, we are persuaded that every child of God who is regenerated by the same Spirit who presided at its composition, will be arrested by the depth of spiritual meaning it contains. Bought by the precious blood of the new covenant, Christ becomes to him his gracious Shepherd. Anointed by the influences of the Spirit, he is hallowed into a priest of the upper sanctuary, and exalted into a king for one of the thrones of heaven. Losses and afflictions are not wanting to try his faithfulness. The world and the rulers of spiritual darkness bestir themselves against him, but in the promises and ordinances of the gospel, there is spread for him a table in spite of them. Having such favours to remember in the past, he may well look forward in the confidence, that his whole life shall be signalised by the goodness and mercy of God ; and when, with faltering step, he enters "the valley of the shadow of death," he may well anticipate that his Shepherd, arisen from the dead, shall meet him according to his promise, to turn all its darkness into light, and open wide for him an entrance into the rest appointed for as many as believe.

In the days of the Judges, when Israel was groaning under heavy oppression, it pleased Jehovah, in the person of Samson the Nazarite giant, to raise up for them a deliverer, who in his life and in his death was so great a scourge to the Philistines. The first proof and revelation of the inspiring power of God were made to the champion in the following manner. Spurred on by an unknown influence, Samson, accompanied by his parents, set out on a journey to Timnath, one of the towns occupied by the Philistines. Having turned aside into a way lying between the vineyards in the neighbourhood of the town, a young lion sprang out on the path before him and roared against him. To save him in his danger, "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid," although there was "nothing in his hand." Judges xiv. 5, 6. In this sudden afflatus of power, the Lord gave Samson a most evident token of his assistance, and showed him, as he entered his enemy's country, that nothing earthly could stand before him (as long as he remained faithful to the Rock of his strength), and encouraged him to venture boldly into the very midst of them, and watch for the opportunities to be afforded him of wreaking on their heads the anger of heaven, and avenging the tears and groans of his brethren of Israel.

In David, the son of Jesse, the Lord raised up not only a temporal deliverer of his people, but also in a certain sense a spiritual, being a restorer of the drooping piety and devotion of the land, and the father of Him who delivered the world from a more grievous bondage than that of Egypt or of Philistia. After Samuel had anointed him as king, and doubtless given him an assurance from on high of his ultimate success, we are told that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward." To prepare him for meeting all the trials and difficulties lying before him, yea to prepare him for meeting the giant of the Philistian army, without even a sword in his hand, the Lord shewed him in the first place an instance of the omnipotence of his help. The incident is thus modestly yet confidently related by himself to Saul when he scrupled to let him go forth against the Philistine because of his youth: "Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion and a bear and took a lamb out of the flock. And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me I caught him by his beard, and smote him and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear." 1 Sam. xvii. 34—36. Emboldened by the gift of this superhuman power at the moment of his need, David saw, and exulted with a holy confidence, that as long as the Almighty fought on his side there could no trial appal him, and no difficulty arrest his steps, and no weapon lifted against him prosper. In this confidence he went forth to meet Goliath, a giant clad in panoply of proof, with neither sword nor spear, with nothing but a shepherd's sling in his hand, saying, "The Lord who delivered me out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." 37.

It is more than probable that David, after this memorable token of divine faithfulness—the power with which he was inspired to destroy the two ravening monsters of the forest—embraced the first opportunity of rendering thank-offerings to the Lord, and praising him before the ark of the covenant. The ark was in those days at Kirjath-jearim in Judea, not very far distant from his native city of Bethlehem. David, as was customary, went thither to worship, and the following Psalm appears to bear every indication of having been composed on the above occasion in the sanctuary before the Sacred Ark, and the mystical cherubim drooping their wings over it.

PS. CXXXVIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. II.

1. I will thank thee with my whole heart;
Before the Cherubim* will I sing praise unto thee.

In 2 Sam. vi. 2, we are incidentally told that the Ark of the Covenant was called by the name of Jehovah-Zebaoth, "the Lord of Hosts, who dwelleth between the cherubim;" and for this reason, that the Shechinah, the representative of Jehovah, shone and hovered between the cherubim and the ark, the cherubim themselves being called אֱלֹהִים (Elohim), the emblems of the Deity. Before these Elohim, before the vail which screened

* In the common version "gods," which represent David kneeling in a heathen temple surrounded by idols, and before them (in their presence, according to the Hebrew) selecting Jehovah and praising him as, on the whole, the best god.

these emblems of the Godhead, David was now worshipping. In the first clause of the verse therefore we need feel no surprise at the omission of the name of God. He begins, without the name, to address the Great Presence in which he stood, worshipping him before the emblems of his presence, the cherubim, and the Shechinah between them.

2. I will worship towards the mansion of thy holiness,
And I will give thanks unto thy name,
On account of thy mercy and because of thy faithfulness,
For by thy promise* thou hast magnified thy name above all.

David having begun to praise and thank God, in this last clause explains in what way the divine mercy and faithfulness had been manifested towards him, viz., by giving him a promise, and also an unquestionable earnest of its fulfilment. By this promise Jehovah had, in his own experience, magnified his divine name "above all," magnified it exceedingly, and given him a brighter revelation of its glory. This promise was the promise of the kingdom, and the earnest of it was the descent of the Spirit and the power by which he conquered the roaring lion. Now he was convinced by a personal proof that Jehovah was the merciful and faithful God of Israel. Formerly he could have said with Job, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear;" but, since the promise, he can also say with Job, "but now mine eye seeth thee." To the same feeling he afterwards gives a new utterance in the words, "Behold I have *tasted* and seen that the Lord is good, happy is the man that puts his trust in him."

David now goes on to specialise the instance in which the mercy and faithfulness of the Lord had been manifested to himself. And this instance, there is much reason to believe, was no other than the power and confidence bestowed upon him for the destruction of his roaring and mighty enemy, the lion.

3. In the day when I called, thou didst answer me;
Thou madest me overmatch with my soul the mighty one.

By the power which the Spirit of God had infused into his soul, and thence into his arm, at the instant of his danger, he had been nerved to overpower and slay the mighty one, that is, the lion, when disappointed of his prey, he "arose against him." But to bring this meaning out of the words in a way to conciliate the critic, we must have recourse to an analysis of the Hebrew רַהֵב (rahav). As an adjective it signifies "bold, proud,

* The word אִמְרָתְךָ (Imrathecha), signifying "thy promise," is one of those awkwardly situated Hebrew compounds of noun and pronoun, which often occasion great difficulty to the translator. We have placed it at the beginning of the clause, "For by thy promise," merely for the sake of simplicity, and thus "by" is warrantably added to the original. But to the thorough Hebrew scholar, who is well acquainted with the idiom of its poetry, it sounds better when thus read כִּי־יִגְדֹלְךָ עַל כָּל שֵׁהָהּ, "For thou hast magnified above all, thy name." But there remains the question, how? The answer is אִמְרָתְךָ (Imrathecha), "thy promise." Even by "thy promise," by and through means of it, hast thou magnified thy name unto me.

or fierce." In this passage it appears as a verb, **תַּרְחִיבֵנִי** (tarhiveni), and in connection with the noun **עֹז** (az), mighty. Its root-meaning is therefore "to outfierce the mighty," that is, to over-match in boldness or fierceness the mighty one. Now, let us turn to Judges xiv. 14, to the enigma of Samson, for an instance of what may be understood of "the mighty." His words are **מֵעַז יָצָא מַתְּחֹק** (meaz yatza mathok), "out of the mighty came forth sweetness." The solution, (betrayed to them by Delilah) was at length given in the answer of the cunning Philistines, **מָה עֹז מֵאִרִי** (meh az meari), "what is mightier than a lion?" It is thus seen that the import of the clause, "Thou madest me over-match or over-power the **עֹז** (az), the mighty, may be easily and properly referred to the lion which he killed in defence of his flock. The meaning of Samson's riddle, to those who know the story, lies on the surface, and since we read of David in his youth meeting and actually overpowering a lion, it is obvious to any one to find this lion in the mighty, or the mighty one, which is so prominently introduced in this Psalm.

There yet remains to be proved the meaning of the word **בְּנַפְשִׁי** (ben-aphshi), "with my soul." For an instance of the same construction, turn to Ps. xviii. 29, **בְּאֱלֹהֵי אֲדָלֵג שׁוּר** (Be Elohai adaleg shur), "With my God, or by my God have I leaped over a wall." This can have no other import than that, by the strength and agility given me by the Lord, I was enabled so to leap. The full significance of "with my soul" will therefore be nothing less than "by the power which the Spirit imparted to my soul," or simply, "by the power of the Spirit within me" I became strong enough to overmatch "the mighty one," or the lion. Of a like construction is the passage in Gen. xlix. 6, "For in their fury they slew a man, **וּבְרִצְוֹנָם** (uvirtzonom) and in their will, or with their will, they tore down a wall." Comp Jud. v. 21, "O my soul thou hast trodden down the mighty."

David now turns to apply prophetically the fulfilment of these promises to others, and shows the influence to be expected on the world at large, when the promises made to him should receive their fulfilment and become universally known.

4. All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Jehovah :
When they hear the promises of thy mouth.
5. And they shall be made to walk upright* in the ways of
the Lord ;
For great is the glory of Jehovah.

In the above verses there is given forth an unmistakeable Messianic prophecy. The promises made to David were of such a nature that when the

* The word **וַיַּשְׁרִיחֻ** (vayashirun), which is rendered above, "They shall be made to walk upright," we believe to be derived not from **שָׁרָה** (shir), "song," which would afford no available meaning, but from **יָשָׁר** (yashar), "upright." The word derived from the same root, in Ps. xlv. 18; cxix. 128, ought to be translated as above. In 1 Sam. vi. 12 the verb is understood in its right meaning.

glad tidings of their fulfilment should be published to the world, there would follow this blessed result, that many nations along with their princes would be brought to the worship of the God of Israel, and acknowledge his glory and obey his commandments in righteousness.

6. For although Jehovah be high, yet he doth countenance the
lowly,
And the proud he knoweth from afar.

There may be here discovered an evident reference to the characters of the two persons, David and Saul. Jehovah is highly exalted on the throne of the universe, and all honour and all power are centred in himself, yet he looks down closely and lovingly on the lowly shepherd David who praises him for his faithfulness, and he elects him to the sceptre of Israel, while on the proud king Saul, who confides in his own arm, he looks coldly or in anger, and rejects him from reigning over his chosen nation.

7. Although I should walk in the midst of distress thou wilt
revive me,
Against the fury of mine enemies thou wilt stretch forth
thine hand,
And thy right hand shall save me.

How glorious the result of that instance which David enjoyed from the Most High of the certain fulfilment of his promises! As in the former Psalm he said in hopefulness, "Although I should walk through the valley of death-shade, I will fear no evil, *provided* Thou art with me," now he can go farther, and speak from experience, and say, "Although I should walk in the midst of distress *thou wilt* revive me." He had been in imminent danger of his life, and Jehovah by his presence and power had saved him; and now, with a perfect confidence, he can look forward to any circumstances, and profess, "Against the fury of mine enemies wilt thou stretch forth thine hand, and thy right hand shall save me."

8. Jehovah will bring to completion the things that concern me :*
O Jehovah, thy mercy is for ever ;
Forsake not the works of thine own hands.

The Psalmist arrives at the happy conclusion that Jehovah, who is perfect in all his attributes, and righteous in all his ways, will leave nothing which he has begun, unfinished. His work of mercy and faithfulness he began in his early history, he had given the promise of greater strength and greater glory, and he was wise in counsel to deliberate for his final good, and excellent in working to bring all his deliberations to a joyful issue. David was a young man, yet the oldest may envy his deep and far-

* The verb יָגִמֹר (yigmor) means, "to complete or bring to a conclusion affairs which are already begun." For a parallel phrase see Ps. lvii. 2, "God, who completes all things for me."

sighted confidence in the Shepherd of the faithful. He flourished in an age of preparation, yet those under the full sway of the gospel may fail to understand, like him, how all things work together for good to them that love God.

There are various other Psalms which betray by their style and sentiment an early period of composition. Of such is the Song of Degrees, which in the ordinary arrangement, numbers as the cxxi., "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills," and which bears the most obvious indications of youth. There are several others which evidently relate to the same period; but as they belong to certain orders, according to which they were given out by David for the Temple service, such as the fifteen Songs of Degrees, we have thought it better to let them remain as they stand at present, the more especially as there is nothing in them essential to the history of the author, or illustrative of other difficulties attaching to the work.

But there are two alphabetical Psalms, the cxi. and cxii., which would seem to belong to the period above mentioned; and although there be nothing in them historical, still as we think them independent of any particular order, we can find no place fitter for them than the present. They are simple but worthy examples of the Hebrew alphabetical form of composition. They may be regarded as the earliest efforts of their author in a style and form of which the great cxix. Psalm, that treasury of knowledge, wisdom, and Christian experience, is the height and consummation. But whereas in the cxix. there is found an eight times doubled alphabet, in the following there is a simpler arrangement of two letters in each verse. But although early and less elaborate, they are thoughtful and animated, they are inspired oracles, and yield to the later and mightier, only as one star differs from another in glory.

PS. CXI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. III.

(A SONG OF PRAISE.)

Hallelulah

Praise ye Jehovah.

1. **N** I will praise Jehovah with my whole heart,
- ב** In the secret meetings of the upright, and in the congregation.

The word סֹדֶר (Sod) denotes a secret or separate meeting, as in Gen. xlix. 6; Ps. lxxxix. 7; Jer. vi. 11, xxiii. 18, 22. In the latter two instances it is erroneously rendered "counsel," as is also done in too many other passages, but Jeremiah there refers to the same secret meetings of the saints for prayer and for the promotion of the cause of God. To such secret or rather private meetings of the saints, the יִשְׁחָרִים (Yesharim), men of upright lives, pure sentiments, and warm affection towards God, David here alludes. Such have been at all times, as in that troubled period under the wicked Saul, the pillars of the church. Malachi iii. 16.

2. ג Greatly magnified are Jehovah's works,
 7 Well adapted for all their purposes.

The word גדול (gadol) "great," has in the Hebrew so extensive a range of meaning, that in the English there is no single substitute expressive enough to take its place. It denotes greatness and augmentation of various kinds. In the above passage, "the works of Jehovah" are described as greatly "magnified or augmented" in their influences and effects on the minds of men who behold them. The "greatness" ascribed to these works, is a greatness in number, in character, in dignity, in beauty, in variety, in riches. The following word חפץ (chephets) has the meaning not only of "a thing desired," and not only "the desire of a thing," but also and chiefly "the great end and object," promoted or gained in the thing desired. In the above passage, חפציהם (chephetsyhem) clearly indicates the great objects and purposes for which the works of Jehovah were intended, and to these ends they are wonderfully well fitted, framed, and adapted. The English version, "sought out of all them that have pleasure therein," is unfortunate in being far too general, and wide from the literal import of the words.

3. ה Majestic and glorious are his operations,
 ר And his righteousness shall continue to eternity.
 4. ז He has erected a monument to his wonderful works :
 ח Gracious and compassionate is Jehovah.
 5. ט He granted provision to those that fear him,
 י That he will remember for ever his covenant.

טֶרֶף (tereph) in ver. 5 signifies "provision," and the same rendering should be given it in Mal. iii. 10, in Prov. xxx. 8, and especially in Prov. xxxi. 15, where it is highly absurd, and derogatory to her wisdom to make the virtuous wife rise in the night season, and disturb the whole household to feed them at a time when their only want is sleep. The meaning of the passage is doubtless this, that she rises early, before her household is awake, "to make provision" both for their food and for their allotted tasks during the day. But in the above verse, where it is said, "that the Lord granted provision to those that fear him," there is an allusion made to ver. 4th, "to the monument which he has erected to his wonderful works." The זֶכֶר (zecher), monument, is nothing else than the rainbow raised and arched into "a monument of his wonderful works," as in it "he granted provision to those that fear him," in it giving them a sign that he will "remember for ever his covenant." Gen. ix. 12—17.

6. כ The power of his works he declared to his people,
 ש That he might give them the heritage of the heathen.
 7. מ The works of his hands are truth and justice ;
 נ All his appointments are confirmed.
 8. ס They are supported for eternal continuation,

- v Being ordained in truth and uprightness.
 9. פ Redemption hath he sent to his people.
 ז He ordered his covenant for ever.
 ק Holy and reverend is his name.

In ver. 6 there is an undoubted reference to the entrance of Israel into possession of the land of promise, after the Lord, in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, had "declared or displayed to them the power of his works." The reference is to the past, and surely there is nothing to be gained in thinking with some that David in ver. 9 goes back to describe over again the deliverance from Egypt. Christians will need little argument to be persuaded that the redemption here sent to God's people is the great salvation of the world by Jesus Christ, and that the covenant here "ordered for ever" is the great and everlasting covenant of the New Testament, of both of which there are various scattered intimations in the Scriptures before the time of David.

10. ר The chief principles of wisdom lie in the fear of the Lord ;
 י They behave wisely who exercise them.
 ח His praise is established for eternity.

The term "Wisdom" is comprehensive, and consists of many and various branches. The ראשית (Rehshith), "first maxims" or "chief principles" of wisdom, lie in Jehovah's fear. They who exercise these principles—they who, by the fear of God, attain the first principles of wisdom, behave wisely, are in a right way of progression toward the great mark.

(PS. CXII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. IV.)

Halleluyah.

Praise ye Jehovah.

1. א Happy is the man who feareth Jehovah,
 ב Delighting exceedingly in his commandments.
 2. ג Excellent on the earth shall be his seed,
 ד With a progeny of upright men shall he be blessed.
 3. ה Wealth and riches shall be in his house,
 ו And his benevolence shall endure for ever.

The word צדקה (tsedeka), which is invariably rendered "righteousness," in many cases denotes "benevolence, or deeds of benevolence." When the Psalmist here speaks of the reward of the God-fearing man, he says not only that his house shall abound with wealth and riches, which he shall himself enjoy in time, but that the reward of the "benevolent deeds" which his abundance affords him the means of doing, shall remain with him to eternity.

4. † He diffused in the darkness light to the upright,
 ¶ Who is merciful and compassionate and righteous.

To comprehend the scope and meaning of this verse, we are obliged to transpose its clauses and read it in the following order: "The merciful, the compassionate, and the righteous (signifying God), hath diffused in the darkness a light to the upright." In order to preserve the original arrangement we have inserted "he" and "who" at the beginning of each line of the verse, which is neither more nor less than what is implied in the literal and correct meaning of the Hebrew words. As to the light which is diffused in the darkness to the upright, together with other and lesser comforts, it must above all be an intimation of that Saviour who was promised as a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel." Behold the promise fulfilled! "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light," the light of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. Isa. ix. 2.

5. † It is good for a compassionate man who lendeth,
 † To regulate his affairs judiciously.
 6. † Thus he shall never be moved (or never fall);
 † In everlasting remembrance he shall be called just.

This is the literal meaning of the Hebrew text, and this rendering wonderfully explains another passage of Scripture otherwise obscure. "Be not righteous overmuch, for why shouldest thou destroy thyself?" Eccles. vii. 16. If a man is willing to show benevolence to the poor, let him do it with judgment. Let him consider well whether what he gives be his own, or whether he does good in his own name at the expense of others. If the latter, then he destroys himself, for he must come to ruin at last, and, while one party will praise him for his benevolence, the other party, his creditors, will revile him for injustice. But, regulating his affairs judiciously, giving only of the overplus of what is his own, he will never fall into this disgrace, and in the remembrance of ages he shall be called "the just man." The lesson, although not uncommon, is a sound one, "justice before generosity." But the Psalmist goes on to extend and finish his picture.

7. † Of evil tidings he shall not be afraid,
 † His heart is firm, trusting in Jehovah.
 8. † His heart is supported, he shall not fear,
 † Until he see the end of his adversaries.
 9. † He hath distributed, he hath given to the needy;
 † His righteous acts shall stand for ever;
 † His horn* shall be exalted in glory.
 10. † The wicked shall see it and be grieved;
 † He shall gnash his teeth and melt away:
 † The desire of the wicked shall perish.

* The word קֶרֶן (Keren), "Horn," which frequently occurs in Scripture, is a figurative expression, and denotes "power, dignity, strength, or glory," of which the "Horn" was considered as an emblem in those days.

To that period of the early history of David, when as a shepherd he tended his father's flocks, some compositions of a peculiarly interesting character are to be ascribed. These were in many respects, perhaps in all, the happiest days of his life, when unharassed by the cares of the world, and free from the miseries of trial, persecution, and disaster, which afterwards overtook him, he devoted a great portion of his time to the contemplation of the works of God in nature. The power and wisdom of the Creator of the universe,—the beauty, variety, and magnificence of his handiworks,—the manifold relations in which man stands to both,—to his Creator, whom he is fitted to seek, and love and adore, and to the creatures over which he has been granted dominion: all these formed the subjects of his earnest and devout meditation. Had the titles of any of his Psalms assigned their composition to this period, we would have expected to find in them all the flowing fulness, rich poetic imagery, and splendid diction of a mind imbued with admiration of these works, and pervaded with high devotional feeling. And such, we apprehend, are the distinguishing characteristics of the three following Psalms,—the 8th, the 19th, and the 104th. With the rich and fervid devotion of youth, but, at the same time, with the large and matured wisdom of age, he surveys the wonders of earth and heaven; and then, with the simplicity of a child, and with the splendour of the prince of poets, he turns them into an hymn of praise in honour of their Creator.

That several such Psalms emanated from this period, may not only be inferred from the tendency of young poets to celebrate the beauties of nature, but may be proved from the internal evidence of other Psalms. When David found himself in great danger and distress, in hiding from the persecutions of Saul, and bereaved of his quiet hours of meditation, when his harp could sound only to heart-rending laments or plaintive supplications, he often looked back and regretted that happy time, when he could spend days and nights under the open sky in musing on the wonderful works of God. In Ps. cxliii. he complains of his perilous and lamentable state in the cave of Adullam. "The enemy hath persecuted my soul, he hath crushed my life down to the ground, he hath made me to dwell in darkness as the dead of the world. Hence is my spirit within me overwhelmed, and my heart within me is desolate." In such a state of darkness and suffering he most naturally turns to the recollection of the past, "I call to remembrance the days of old, when I meditated on all thy operations, when I mused on the works of thine hands." And how does he describe the kind and degree of attention which he devoted to the contemplation of nature, as manifesting the greatness and glory of God? "When I stretched forth my hands unto thee; when my soul, as a weary land, was after thee, Selah," or continually. The figures here employed are peculiarly expressive; the former, denoting an eager seeking after knowledge, as a famishing beggar stretches forth his hand for a piece of bread; the latter, representing a soul panting continually after more and more knowledge, yet never satisfied, as land exhausted by long continued drought thirsts for the rains of heaven. Such complaints show plainly that David, in his earlier years, must have spent much of his time in devoutly contemplating the varied and magnificent works of God. Many other passages might be adduced, which would illustrate and confirm our statement; but as farther remark on the subject would be out of place here, we refer the reader to our translation and exposition of the 143d Psalm for more extended illustration.

PS. VIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. V.

(Lamnatzeach) "To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A SONG OF DAVID.

Performed upon the harp called Gittith.*

The omission of all reference to the sun in this Psalm, may be given and taken as a sufficient proof that it was composed in the solemn and tranquil season of night. In the quiet and verdant vallies of Judea, the inspired shepherd, with the harp in his hand, watching beside his flock, and musing on the softly-shadowed scenes around him, lifting his eyes toward the glowing sky of an eastern clime, beholds with admiration the moon walking in brightness, attended by her innumerable retinue of sparkling stars. Lifted on high by the Spirit within him, to the thought of that great God who created all these wonders, he strikes his harp, and sings and adores.

1. O Jehovah, our God !
How magnificent is thy name in all the earth,
Who hast placed thy grandeur in the heavens above !

This is the arrangement of the verse in the original, but, in order to understand it in its full force and simplicity, we must transpose the latter clauses, which is quite agreeable to the construction, and read it thus :

- O Jehovah, our God !
Who hast placed thy grandeur in the heavens above,
How magnificent is thy name in all the earth !

The chief display of the grandeur of God is to be seen in the heavens. On earth below there are works sublime enough to command our admiration, but how largely do the moon and stars, looking down upon us from above, contribute to enhance their effect on our minds, and further illustrate the magnificence of the name of the Creator.

2. From the mouth of babes and sucklings,
Thou art mightily fortified against thy opponents ;
Even to put to silence the enemy and the blasphemers.

"From the mouth" of any one, means, by "the testimony" to be expected from him. "By the mouth of two or three witnesses a thing shall be established." The handiworks of God are so obvious in their beauty

* The harp now employed is styled גִּטִּית (Gittith), meaning "wine-press," the instrument being shaped like the wine-press at that time in use in Judea. For the word לַמְנַצֵּחַ (Lamnatzeach), see Introduction, Part iv., at the end.

and excellence as to be noticeable to a child. They afford such arguments of His being, omnipotence, and glory, that with these, the simplest and least learned of men (here introduced under the figure of babes and sucklings) may refute and confound the bitterest blasphemers and enemy of the truth. This is so well established, that, when Paul has to deal with unbelievers, he merely takes the poetry of the Psalmist and turns it into logic. "For the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." Rom. i. 20.

But the thoughts of the Psalmist are not long detained by the array of stars, however bright and admirable. From the view of such wonders he is turned to the contemplation of man, of man dwindling into insignificance in comparison with these, and yet through the boundless grace of God rising above and over them.

3. When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers,
The moon and the stars which thou hast formed ;
4. What is man that thou art mindful of him ?
And the son of man that thou visitest him ?
5. Still thou madest him a little lower than angels ;
And hast crowned him with glory and honour :
6. Thou gavest him dominion over the works of thine hands,
And didst put all things under his feet :
7. Flocks and all herds, also the beasts of the field,
8. The fowl of the heavens, and the fish of the sea
That pass along the path of the waters.
9. O Jehovah, our God !
How magnificent is thy name in all the earth !

There is no occasion for dwelling particularly upon this sacred ode, yet we cannot forbear a few remarks on the peculiarity of the fifth and sixth verses. "Jehovah," says David, "made man a little lower than angels, crowned him with glory and honour, and gave him dominion over the works of his hands, and put all things under his feet." "Man," says Job, "that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble ; he cometh forth like a flower and is cut down, he fleeth also like a shadow and continueth not." Who and what then is the man, corresponding to the lofty picture drawn of him by David ? "*Thou madest him,*" says the Psalmist, so we need not look for him in man fallen, self-ruined and self-depraved ; but only in man upright, the work of God, and in his state of innocence. Then God was indeed mindful of man, arrayed him in holiness, and placed him in Eden, and he often wonderfully visited him, descending to commune with him in the cool of the day. Although he had an animal body formed out of the dust of the ground, still in his spirit being holy and heavenly, and ruling over all the irrational creatures as his subjects, he was only "a little lower than angels."

But how much greater reason had David for expressing such sentiments of wonder and adoration, when he was permitted the view of self-ruined man restored to his original dignity and happiness in the Redeemer ! He speaks of man, not only as insignificant, but also as a sinful, guilty, and already condemned being. In contrasting him in such degraded condition,

with the mighty worlds of light over his head, and with the omnipotent and at the same time, perfect and holy God who created them, it is his feeling of the contrast which is now expressed, "What is man" that God should be so mindful of him as to take compassion on him in his low and lost estate, and "what is the son of man" (in Hebrew בֶּן אָדָם, Ben Adam, the Son of Adam), the fallen son of the fallen father, that he should visit him with a Saviour, from his misery and sin?" "What is man," that for his sake, he who was the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, should for a time submit to become a little lower than angels, by putting on the likeness of sinful flesh? "What is man," that through such a Saviour, he should be crowned with glory and honour as at first, and in a loftier sense than before, made lord of all the works of Jehovah, and have all things put under his feet?

There is another point claiming our attention in this passage, and that is the primary or secondary application to which the clause, "Thou madest him a little lower than angels," may be turned. If David be understood to speak of man in his state of innocence, then the point of the expression is that he was made *only* "a little lower than angels." But if it be taken as the utterance of his astonishment, that God should visit man with a Saviour in the person of his Son, then the tendency of the clause is the following, that he who was of a dignity infinitely higher than angel or archangel, stooped so far as to become flesh, and thus be made "lower than angels," who were formerly the ministers of his glory. That this secondary sense is the true scope and purpose of the passage, is clearly brought out in a letter of the great apostle of the Gentiles, who thoroughly expounds it in its application to Christ. Heb. ii. 5—9. "One in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels." There is here acknowledged the mysterious love of Jehovah the Father, in raising up for the miserable race of men, a Saviour in their own likeness, and out of the midst of them as a brother. But as it was the glory of the first Adam to be what he was, so it was the humiliation of the second Adam to be what he became. Nevertheless, although for a time lower than the angels, yet on account of the suffering of death for men, "thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thine hands, thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." His sway is nowhere limited. There is nothing able to claim exemption from his authority. "For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him." This cannot be said of the human race, or any ordinary member of the race, for although in a large sense man is still the lord of the irrational creatures, nevertheless, "now we see not yet *all* things put under him." But although we do not yet see man, we see Jesus the representative of man, after he had by himself purged our sins, sitting down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, upholding all things by the word of his power, and with all things, even "the world to come," put in subjection under him. Heb. i. 3.

In this passage, therefore, we are taught by the Holy Spirit, who spoke by David of the glory of the risen Redeemer, and of the glory of man as regenerated and restored in him. That there is nothing beyond propriety in this two-fold interpretation is soon after, in the course of his argument,

plainly indicated by the apostle. "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed (even in his exaltation) to call them brethren." Heb. ii. 11. We read elsewhere in one of his own discourses, that as many as do the will of the Father (by believing on his name) are his brethren, and if the brethren of Christ, then they are the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and of all his perfections, and joint-heirs with Christ in his kingdom. Thus, although man in himself be fallen, and degraded, and undone, yet in Jesus we behold him restored, in Jesus sanctified, in Jesus crowned and enthroned in glory and honour for ever.

PS. XIX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. VI.

(Lamnatzeach), To the Chief Cause of all Events.

A SONG OF DAVID.

If the want of any reference to the sun in the last Psalm be taken as a presumptive proof that it was composed during the night, from the same kind of internal evidence it may be concluded that the 19th was composed during the day. The moon and the stars are now absent, for the sun has arisen and spread his dazzling wings over the watchers of the night, and hidden them from the eyes of the inspired bard. In this, as in the former case, the Psalmist in contemplating the scenes presented to him in the heavens and earth is lost in admiration of the glory of God, and in the rapture of his devotion gives out the most thrilling tones of poetry and music. If supposition could in any way be established as evidence, we should wish to have it concluded that these two sublime odes are sister and brother, kindred inspirations of the Holy Spirit, the one originating under the shadow of night, with its clusters of stars, and the other under the splendour of morning, as it broke over the hills of Bethlehem.

1. The heavens publish the glory of God,
And the works of his hands the expanse declareth.
2. Day unto day uttereth speech,
And night unto night sheweth knowledge.

The figure in the second verse is evidently that of the interchanging watchmen of a camp or city. The one fulfilling his time and leaving his post, communicates the appointed motto or watchword to the sentinel who succeeds him.

From the arrangement of the verse, "*Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge,*" it is obvious that the reference is to the real order in which the day ever marches onward from one part of the globe to another, according to the established laws of the solar system, the effect of the continual revolution of the bodies belonging to it. So is it with the night, which is, as it were, left behind by the day. In this view the figure is striking, for day actually goes on to day, and night follows on to night, in continuous succession, as watchman succeeds watchman. If this idea were not conveyed by these words, David would have said, "Day unto night and night unto day," according to the visible order of things as

they appear in one place. If it be asked, Did David understand the order referred to? or was it known in his days? We answer that he might not have comprehended it, but the Spirit, by whose dictation he wrote, understood it. (Job xxxviii. 31, 32, and other similar passages may serve as illustrations of the above remarks.)

Do we search into the character of the motto given by day to day, or ask the sound and meaning of the watchword passed on from night to night? O, that this sublime figure could become a reality, that we might hear these ancient orators worthily deliver the burden of their message in the language of men! "Is not God in the height of heaven? The whole earth is full of his glory! Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice!"

But there is no audible voice to be expected, and only by their order and beauty do they preach, but in their silence there is an eloquence beyond words, which leaves no excuse for unbelief, except to the blind.

3. There is no speech and no words,
For their voice is not heard,—
4. Yet their sound goeth throughout the earth,
And their arguments to the ends of the world;
For in them he hath pitched a tent for the sun.

The idea conveyed here is, that although the heavens do not actually speak to us in words (for their voice is never heard), yet, inasmuch as the Lord hath placed the sun there, the glorious light of which unfolds admirable objects to our view, and gives us a bright display of the mighty works of the Creator everywhere, it may be truly said, that the heavens do publish the glory of God, and that the expanse does declare Jehovah's handiworks. The continual succession of day and night, and the magnificent harmony of the celestial bodies in their courses, proclaim the glory and majesty, the omnipotence and faithfulness of God; while all that we see above us and around us combine to teach us *knowledge*, even the knowledge of Jehovah the Creator of the universe. But the chief design of the Psalmist here being to show that the sun—the leader as it were of the whole system—is the great instrument by means of which that knowledge is opened up to us, and that the Lord had pitched a tent for him in the skies, he continues to describe his course and his universal influence.

5. And he, as a bridegroom, goeth forth from his chamber;
He rejoiceth like a giant in running his course.
6. From the end of the heavens is his going forth,
And his circuits unto the ends of them;
And nothing is hid from his flame.

By figures at once vivid and sublime, David demonstrates that the whole array of objects in the firmament and on the earth, which the light of the sun makes us conversant with, are, though passive and dumb, yet impressive and wonderful instructors of mankind in the knowledge of that great Being, for the display of whose glory they were called into existence. The comparison of the rising sun to a bridegroom coming forth from his chamber arrayed in his splendid apparel, is beautiful and fit; his appearance

is hailed with pleasure and joy by his friends,—so the sun, ascending from the east, diffuses light and gladness over the whole face of nature. But now the figure changes, and as he runs his mighty career with unwearied constancy from east to west, he is compared to a giant running a race. The latter has but one object in view, and is determined on accomplishing it. He rejoices to anticipate the goal, and so runs cheerfully. In like manner the sun pursues his course, and triumphantly completes his revolution, while nothing remains hidden from his genial rays. Thus spreading light and splendour everywhere, he, as it were, invites men to behold with admiration the mighty works of the Creator, and to be instructed therefrom in knowledge of him.

Thus far has the inspired shepherd taught us how to know God by contemplating the works of creation. All objects revealed, brightly or dimly, by day or by night, are the dumb but real teachers of mankind, and being visible, they show and manifest in a certain degree the invisible God. The Psalm before us consists of two parts, each of them having a different topic to unfold. There is, 1. The Revelation of God in Creation; and, 2. The Revelation of God in his Law or Word. David having, in elevated terms, expatiated on the first of these topics, now suddenly turns to the second, and shows that in the mercy of God we are not left to the dumb tuition of nature, but have a more sure and certain Word of Truth as our guide. Although from the works of his hands we might be able to infer the existence of our Creator, still his real character would remain to us a mystery. Although we could learn of his Omnipotence, we might remain ignorant of his Holiness; although we might fear him, we would not know with any certainty how to obey him. We might conclude that we, together with his other works, were created for the promotion of his glory, still it remained that we should be taught in what way his glory might be chiefly promoted. We might have some conviction of our unworthiness, and even guilt, in his sight, and yet be unconscious of the desperateness of our depravity, and unaware of his mercy and good-will towards us nevertheless, and of his gracious plan for our salvation from misery and sin. Hence neither would our fear be the right godly fear, nor our attempts at obedience acceptable, nor our love perfect through faith. It is therefore with good reason that the sacred poet passes on to praise the God of revelation for his Word, by unfolding its excellency and use.

7. Jehovah's instruction is perfect, restoring the soul.

Jehovah's testimonies are true, making wise the simple.

The word תּוֹרָה (Torah), commonly translated Law, literally signifies "instruction or teaching." Although it doubtless refers to the instruction imparted to Israel in the Law, still, as it is often confined to the doctrinal part of the Law, as in the text, it must lose its particular force and meaning when always rendered by the general word. David affirms, doubtless from his own experience, that the instruction of the Law of the Lord is a perfect instruction, perfectly fitted to restore from any condition the soul of man, to restore a dead soul to life, an erring soul to truth, a guilty soul to righteousness, to restore a Satan-enslaved soul to God.*

* The apostate Church of Rome is, however, not ashamed to maintain in her effrontery that the instruction neither of the Old nor New Testament is an instruction perfect enough

עֵד (eyd) sing., means either "a witness or a testimony," either a person bearing witness to another person, or a thing viewed as a testimony to another thing as yet unseen, absent, or future. In the text it is in the plural עֵדוּת (eyduth) "testimonies," and includes the various types appointed in the Law as testimonies or witnesses of things greater and beyond themselves, or, as the apostle calls them, "shadows of good things to come." These testimonies, says David, are "true," they are true witnesses of the great Antitype who was promised, and well adapted as a good schoolmaster to make wise the simple and lead them to Christ, who is the substance of the shadows, and whose Gospel is the power and wisdom of God for the salvation of men.

8. Jehovah's statutes are right, cheering the heart :

Jehovah's commands are bright, enlightening the eyes.

The Hebrew word פִּקּוּדֵי, (Pikudey) is here intended to indicate the appointments of God, and his charges committed to Israel as the depositories of the divine oracles. These "statutes" or appointments are said to be "right," but יָשָׁר (yashar) means also "plain, proper, straight"—said of a thing exactly fitted for its purpose. The statutes of the Lord are well and rightly framed, and because revealing his own gracious will and leading men in the path of righteousness and peace, they are cheering to the heart.

מִצְוָה (Mitzvah) comprehends all the precepts, orders, and commands of the Law, whether impulsive or prohibitory. These precepts are bright, enlightening the eyes of the understanding, teaching men the will of God, and the honour and happiness of doing his will. In these orders and commands we see a light above that of Nature, not dim and vague and confused, as in early dawn, but clear and steadfast and well-defined like the day. We are unmistakeably taught what sins to avoid, and what virtues to love, and what deeds of faith to pursue. We are thus, through grace, shamed out of our evil works of darkness, and brought to walk in holiness as children of the light.

9. The fear of Jehovah is pure, enduring for ever.

Jehovah's judgments are true, and altogether righteous.

The fear of the Lord is doubtless that kind and degree of reverence and awe, with which we are bound to look upon our relation to God as the creatures of his hand, and to be careful, as such, to live for the promotion of his glory. Hence also, we are to beware of slighting his revealed will, or knowingly transgressing any of his commandments. This fear is pure, the object of it being a holy God, and the subject of it being called to be holy. It is pure, unmingled with doubt or hate or slavish terror, not sullied by an abject and

to restore a soul. Therefore the instruction of the Lord she suppresses, destroying her victims with the instructions of popes, cardinals, bishops, and priests, all equally perfect in lying delusions.

ignorant obedience, not embittered by the black and cruel looks of a tyrant. It endureth for ever, its course is not shifting and doubtful, neither is its consummation uncertain. It leads its possessor aright, saving him from falling into snares and temptations; and as it is the chief principle of wisdom, it has an everlasting and final reward in heaven.

The idea conveyed in the latter clause is noble, that all the judgments of God, without the least exception, are truthful and righteous, all of them corresponding to the character of Him who is "holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works." Whether they be seen in the acquittal of the faithful, or the condemnation of an impious offender, they are all in accordance with the unchangeable rectitude of his government. Whether their tenor be of warning or example, they all work together for good to them who fear and obey him. They are united, notwithstanding their variety, in the one bond of truthfulness, and righteousness, and perfection.

The Law or Word of God is thus divinely adapted to restore, to instruct, to confirm, and to glorify, the soul of man; and any other blessing, however rich or delightful, when compared with it in value, only shows that it is beyond comparison.

10. They are more desirable than gold, than much fine gold,
And sweeter than honey dropping from the combs.

They, the instructions, testimonies, statutes, and judgments of the Word of God, are dearer to the soul of the believer than any treasures of the world, or any gratifications of the desires of the flesh.

11. Therefore is thy servant heedful (or cautious) in observing them,
even for the chief end.

עֵקֶב (ekev) signifies the end, event, or consequence of a thing; and here it is in conjunction with the word רֵב (rov), which is chief or excellent. The Psalmist was heedful in observing these for an end in view, and that was, the chief end of advancing the glory of God, by whom they were given, and of securing the salvation of his own soul in their observance.

12. Who can discern the deviations (or errors)?
O cleanse thou me from secret faults.

By the very spirituality and perfection of the Law, it is rendered impossible for a fallen son of Adam to know the will of God to its full extent, or fulfil it in all its points to the utmost. No man can discern all the instances in which he fails or offends, and the errors unknown to himself are the more dangerous, as they cannot be corrected. It is therefore a wise and most important prayer of David's, that he might be taught to understand his deviations from the Law, and cleansed from all the faults secret to himself, and from their real and evil effects on his soul.

13. Also from the arrogant, preserve thy servant;
O let them not have dominion over me.

Then shall I be spotless,
And shall be cleared of many a transgression.

Here we are led to the frequent origin of the secret faults above mentioned. There is nothing more dangerous to a young man, to teach him a forgetfulness of God, and instil into his mind false principles of morality, than vain, proud, and arrogant companions. Thus by degrees many habits may come to be regarded as innocent, harmless, or laudable, which are most abominable in the eyes of Him in whose sight the heavens are not pure. To their evil advice and example, to the thoughtless gaiety which they affect, or to the deceitful principles which they inculcate, may be traced many of the secret sins of ignorance or infirmity, which, if not shone upon and purged by the Spirit of grace, would cling to the soul and remove it from the holiness of heaven for ever.

The word זְדִים (Zedim), above rendered "arrogant," may also be understood to mean "enticers," according to which the verse may be thus modified—"Also from enticers, preserve thy servant; O let them not prevail over me."

It is a thing quite peculiar with David, after having prayed the Lord for the grant of some blessing, to offer up a second prayer that the former may be heard and accepted. It is a proof of the closeness with which he watched his own heart, and also of his deep spirituality of mind, to hear him so often asking forgiveness for the imperfections always mingling with prayer, and entreating that his prayers might be heard and answered—that his devotional meditation might be inspired, and made acceptable to God.

14. O let the words of my mouth be acceptable;
And the meditation of my heart before thee,
Jehovah, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Herein is his confidence, not in his own prudence, not in his own stability, but in Jehovah, who is his Rock of shelter and defence against the proud ones, who sought to bend him to their will, against the enticers who sought to flatter him into their ways of deceit; who is his Redeemer, to save him from all his errors and backslidings, and to cleanse him from all his secret faults, which would otherwise have ended in his ruin.

The other Psalm spoken of, as to all appearance owing its composition to the same early period of the life of David, is the one numbered in the existing collection as the 104th. This is a high and magnificent hymn in honour of God, celebrating his power, wisdom, and goodness, as these attributes are displayed in the creation of the universe; in the mechanism of the heavens, with their changing aspects of day and night; but chiefly in the establishment of the earth, with all its forms of animal and vegetable life; and above all, the entire dependence of the whole on the care and bounty of the Creator. It also rises in the spirit to describe the mysterious pleasure taken by God in his own works, as personally moving in all the changes and revolutions of nature, as shining forth visibly in her joy and brightness, as hiding himself in her trouble and gloom; and concludes with a repeated ascription of glory, and a dedication of his whole life to his praise.

It is inferred by some from the fact, that as Jehovah is in this Psalm addressed alternately in the second and in the third person, it must therefore consist of different parts alternately sung by several companies. But in whatever way it was sung when delivered by David for the use of the sanctuary, as far as concerns the changes above noticed, they are quite native to the Hebrew poetry, and more especially adopted in songs of praise, such as the present. It is, however, peculiar to this Psalm, that the Poet and his Soul arouse and provoke each other to alternate stanzas in blessing the Lord and in praising his works. The Poet calls upon his Soul, "O my Soul, bless thou Jehovah!" and the Soul awakes at the invitation and answers, "O Jehovah my God, thou art exceedingly great!" &c. When the Soul has ended her first stanza the Poet again begins, "O my Soul, bless thou Jehovah!" but instead of waiting for a response as at first, he himself breaks out into praise, in haste and heat to show his Soul the greatness of the Being whom he invited her to adore; and in the same manner the Soul continues to praise and adore Jehovah, to the end of the stanza. This alternate chaunt goes on to the 24th verse, when both unite in a chorus, which rolls and swells along to the 31st verse. Only one call more follows in verse 32, and in the verse following, the Soul resolves to praise God, not for any time set and appointed her, but always while she lived in time and in eternity; and the Psalm ends as it began, with the call, "O my Soul, bless thou Jehovah!" and a general Hallelujah.

We therefore restore the Psalm to what we conceive to be its native arrangement, introducing at the proper place the invitation of the Poet (P.) and the response of the Soul (S.)

PS. CIV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. VII.

P.

1. O my soul, bless thou Jehovah !

S.

- Jehovah, my God, thou art exceedingly great ;
In glory and majesty thou art arrayed :
2. Who clothest thyself with light as with a garment,
Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain.

P.

[O my Soul, bless thou Jehovah.]

3. Who flooreth with waters his chambers ;
Who maketh the clouds his chariots ;
Who walketh upon the wings of the wind ;
4. Who maketh his angels spirits,
His ministers a flaming fire.
5. Who based the earth upon her foundations,
That she should not be moved world without end.

Some Christian writers on the Psalms have been led into the erroneous

idea of regarding the word מַלְאָכָיו (malachov) not as meaning "angels" but "messengers," and the word רֻחוֹת (ruchoth), not as meaning "spirits," but "winds." Now knowing, as we do, that the words in question admit of both interpretations; and that owing to the very nature of things, as we could convey no clearer idea of those heavenly invisible beings than by comparing them to messengers, there being no better emblematical name in the Hebrew tongue for an angel or a spirit than רֵיחַ, wind; still we are firmly given to understand this passage with the great apostle, in Heb. i. 7, that the two words do mean and intend "angels" and "spirits," rather than be carried along with the rationalistic German, the infidel Jew, or the erring Christian.

In the Greek language, as well as in the Hebrew, the word signifying "spirit" signifies also "wind," as in John iii. 8. To πνευμα is rendered "the wind," i.e., bloweth where it listeth; and again in John iv. 24, the same word is a definition of God. God is a πνευμα. Now will these critics maintain that the word has the same meaning in John iv. 24 as in John iii. 8. If so, then they must read the passage thus, "God is a *wind*, and they that worship him must worship him in *wind* and in truth." Thus we see the absurdity of such an idea.

O poor deluded men, why will they not seek their greatness in loving the sublime simplicity of the Word of God, rather than in perverting it? But they maintain that David in this passage is speaking of the phenomena of *visible* nature, and therefore cannot be thought to introduce angels, who are *invisible* spirits. Now we cannot conceive how men of such learning, as some of these are, can shut their eyes and consent to become blind. Think of the gigantic imagery, the grandeur of diction, and the lofty ideas conveyed in the opening of this hymn! The Ancient of Days in divine glory and majesty, in celestial grandeur and holy beauty, arrayed in a dazzling light, covered with mysterious clouds, and accompanied by innumerable companies of angels and seraphim is riding through the vast universe upon the wings of the whirlwind, governing all, ruling over all the works of his hands, and dealing according to his sovereign will with the hosts of heaven and with the armies of the earth? Have these critics ever beheld the omnipotent Jehovah arrayed in light, and making the clouds his chariot, and walking upon the wings of the wind? If not, why talk of *visible* nature alone being represented? Others of them say that God is here described as he appeared on Sinai, or as he appeared in the age of the patriarchs. Well, when Jehovah descended in the midst of the clouds in a flaming fire on the Mount, was he not accompanied with ten thousands of his holy angels? Deut. xxxiii. 2; Gal. iii. 19.

Verse 5. "Who based the earth upon her foundations."—If we even think of our globe as suspended in circumambient space, and kept steady in its orbit by the force of gravitation, will this lessen the truth and grandeur of the poetical figure which speaks of the earth as upborne by strong and immovable pillars and foundations? As for the concluding words עוֹלָם וָעֶד (olam vaed), given as above, "world without end," according to their literal meaning, let it be remembered that David is speaking only of the power and possibility of duration possessed by the earth. God so established it that by no natural cause within itself, by no outbreak of fierce elements, could it even be removed without his permis-

sion from that station which he assigned it. But we are elsewhere told by the same Spirit who presided over this Psalm that it shall wax old as doth a garment (Isa. li. 6): That the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up (2 Pet. iii. 10); but this shall be done only at the high behest of him who created the earth independent of all power but his own.

S.

[Jehovah my God, thou art exceedingly great.]

6. The deep thou hast overspread like a garment,
That, above the mountains, the waters stood.

Over the tops of the loftiest mountains the waters of the Deluge were spread like a garment; "And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, and all the high hills that were under the whole heavens were covered." Gen. vii. 19.

7. At thy rebuke they fled,
At thy thundering voice they hurried away.
8. Up the mountains, down the vallies,
Into the place which thou hast founded for them.

When at the voice of the Almighty the waters were dispersed and put to flight, no barrier could stand in their way to check their progress. Like an overwhelmed and flying army chased by the fury of a pursuing enemy, they were driven over the mountains, and down the depths of the vallies, until they reached the bed of the ocean, the place founded for them.

9. A boundary thou hast set which they may not pass,
Nor return again to cover the earth.

After the flood the Lord gave such an assurance to Noah and his family, "And I will establish my covenant with you: neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood: neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth." (Gen. ix. 11.) And he also deigned to repeat this assurance by the mouth of Jeremiah, "Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bounds of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar yet can they not pass over it?" Jer. v. 22.

P.

[O my soul, bless thou Jehovah.]

10. Who sendeth forth springs into streams
That they should run between the mountains:

The Lord from a small beginning sends out the springs which run and meet and mingle and form themselves into large streams. By this beautiful law every living creature is saved from perishing of thirst, and as they, after gaining strength and volume, take their course through remote and

sandy deserts, the wild ass and the other denizens of the wilderness are supplied with drink.

11. They afford drink to all the beasts of the field,
They quench the thirst of the wild asses :
12. Over them the fowls of heaven do dwell,
From among the leafy branches they give a song.

"Over them," or above the streams, *i.e.* in the trees along their borders, in whose branches overhanging the water the birds of the air build their nests and sing. The second clause is an explanation of the first.

13. Who watereth the hills from his chambers ;
With the fruits of his operations the earth is replenished.
14. Who maketh grass to grow for the cattle,
And herbs for the service of man ;
That he may bring forth bread from the earth :

For מַעֲשֵׂיָהּ (Maasecha) read מַעֲשֵׂי (Maasov), as the former is incorrect and would destroy the whole passage, which is all spoken in the third person.

The word עֵשֶׂב (Eysev) includes every herb bearing seed, and every sort of grain ; see Gen. i. 29. David means that it is given to man not only for present use, but also, by sowing its seed, to bring forth new bread from the earth.

15. And wine to gladden the heart of man,
To brighten his countenance more than oil,
And bread to strengthen the heart of man.

This simile is not so appreciable by the people of the west, but the Orientals used to anoint their faces with oil and make them shine. This verse is in close connection with the foregoing. He who makes grass to grow for the cattle, also makes wine to gladden, and bread to strengthen, the heart of man.

16. The trees of the Lord are richly supplied,
Even the cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted ;

The gigantic growth of the cedars of Lebanon is ascribed to God solely ; to the care or skill of man they owe none of their magnificence. They grow on the wild mountains where they were planted by God, and their roots are moistened from below, and their branches from the clouds above, and so they flourish on, for they are "richly supplied, or "abundantly provided for," *i.e.* by the Governor of nature.

17. Wherein the birds build their nests :
As for the stork, the fir-trees constitute her dwelling.
18. The high mountains are a refuge for the wild goats,
And the rocks a refuge for the conies.

The שָׁפָן (shaphan) is a little timid animal "not larger than a hedgehog," which in Palestine is called "the bear-mouse." It abounds in the wilder districts, and is never seen but among the clefts and caverns of the rocks. The שֶׁפְּנִים (Shephanim), says Solomon, "are but a feeble folk," but exceeding wise, "they build their houses in the rock." Prov. xxx. 26. Their feet are too weak to burrow like the rabbit, but they enjoy a greater security; by their wisdom, choosing to lodge in the clefts of the rock.

19. He appointed the moon for stated seasons,
The sun knoweth his point of setting.

S.

[O Jehovah my God, thou art exceedingly great.]

20. Thou bringest on darkness and it is night,
Wherein all beasts of the forests creep abroad.
21. The young lions are roaring after prey,
And seeking from God their food.
22. The sun ariseth, they withdraw themselves,
And into their dens they couch again.
23. Then man goeth forth to his work,
And to his labour until the evening.

BOTH TOGETHER.

24. How manifold are thy works, O Jehovah !
In wisdom thou hast made them all,
The earth is filled with thy properties.

קִינְיֹן (Kinyon) signifies possession or property acquired in whatever manner, by purchase, inheritance, or otherwise. The world and the fullness thereof belong to the Lord by creation and by providence, hence "the earth is filled with thy properties or possessions."

25. Behold that vast ocean with its outspread arms,
There, are moving things without number,
Creatures both small and great.
26. There the ships pass along;
There is Leviathan whom thou hast formed to sport therein.
27. All of them look wishfully to Thee,
To appoint them their food in due season.
28. What thou givest them they gather;
Thou openest thine hand, they are satisfied with good.

29. When thou hidest thy face, they are confounded ;
 Thou takest away their breath, they die,
 And unto their dust they return.
30. When thou sendest forth thy Spirit they are created ;
 And thou renewest the face of the earth.

From the contents of this verse it may be presumed, that the Psalmist, in verse 27, included the vegetable world, as well as men and animals ; "All of them," *i.e.* all things here commemorated either before or after, "look anxiously to Thee." The flowers, and the trees, and the crops, when parched by long drought, do appear to look anxiously for the rain of heaven to revive them. They too are confounded when, in the winter season, the Lord, as it were, hides his face. But when, in spring, he again sends forth his Spirit, the first principle of all that is called life, then there is an universal renovation ; a new generation of living creatures, and a new display of verdure, of flowers, and of blossoms, the predictions of fruits, and the whole family of nature shouts again for joy.

31. The glory of Jehovah shall last for ever,
 Jehovah shall rejoice in his own works.

P.

[O my soul, bless thou Jehovah.]

32. Who looketh on the earth, and it trembleth ;
 Who toucheth the mountains, and they smoke.

S.

[Jehovah, my God, thou art exceedingly great.]

33. I will sing unto Jehovah while I live,
 I will chaunt unto my God throughout mine eternal being.

Such and no less must be the meaning of **בְּעוֹדִי** (Beodi), not only "being," but "everlasting being;" and in the same sense it appears in Ps. cxxxix. 18. Even the word **עַד** (ad), when taken singly as a noun, often denotes as much as "to eternity," as in Job xix. 24 ; Ps. cxi. 3 ; as also in Is. ix. 6, where **אֲבִי-עַד** (avi ad) is doubtless "the Eternal Father." It must also here have the same force, and be understood as meaning "for, or in, or during my perpetuity." Hence there is much more in the passage than a mere repetition. The soul which is invited to bless Jehovah, cheerfully answers, saying, "I will sing unto Jehovah while I live," while living in the flesh ; but my praises will not then cease, for "I will chaunt unto my God during my eternal being."

34. Then shall my meditation on him be sweet,
 Yea, I will rejoice in Jehovah.

The pious Bishop Horne will best expound this joy in the Lord—"And who, O Divine Psalmist, will not sing with thee, that hath an understand-

ing to apprehend, or a tongue to celebrate, the works of his Maker and Redeemer? To whom will not thy heavenly meditation be sweet as honey, fragrant as the breath of spring, pleasant and cheering as the fruit of the vine? Who doth not long to partake of thy spiritual joy and holy gladness?"

P.

35. The sinners shall vanish away from the earth,
And the wicked shall exist no more.
O my soul, bless thou Jehovah!

BOTH.

Halleluyah! Praise ye Jehovah.

There is no man living who could add lustre to this noble hymn by his praise, neither is there any language under the sun fitted to expound it worthily, nor is there any Christian who will not find some of the truth of heaven pervading its strain. The writer of these humble remarks was so overcome with awe in reviewing it, that he has left it to its own influence in a literal translation, merely adding a note where he conceived it not out of place. But to the reader his request is to pause and think, and see what pleasant flowers or fruits may be discovered in this portion of David's paradise, feeling the while that, like Moses, he is on holy ground. It will be good for him, after viewing the greatness and the provident bounty of Jehovah, to resolve to praise him while he lives on earth, that he may be privileged to praise him throughout an immortal existence in heaven. In this frame of spirit shall his meditations on God be sweet.

Of such beauty and magnificence are these hymns, which we believe to be the earliest productions of the inspired shepherd of Bethlehem; and several, if not many, of the other Psalms—could their evidence be seen and followed out—may belong to the same happy and tranquil period of his life. And when shall the green vallies of Judea again resound to such strains as flowed from the tongue and harp of David? Never in the time to come, and but once, did it happen in the past; but from no mortal voice, from no earthly instrument, did they flow! After the lapse of a thousand years, on that happy night when the Son of God, the great Antitype of David, was born, when a brightness from on high fell on the same region—when the angel brought down the tidings of great joy to the shepherds, then, amidst the flashes of lightning, appeared a multitude of the heavenly host, singing and praising God, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will towards men." Then alone was heard a like sound of spiritual song, as went abroad in these vallies when the youngest son of Jesse was taken from the flocks, and raised up as an anointed and inspired Psalmist of the Most High!

But the history of David very soon turns into other scenes than those of pastoral peace and poetical meditation. He who was destined to be so close a type of the persecuted Nazarene, could not long remain untroubled in the house of his father. He who was to prefigure the Man of Sorrows, to prophesy of him while describing himself, and to mourn and complain for him in his own typical person, could not long rest unharassed by grief and

affliction. David, therefore, was soon, by mysterious dealings of Providence, caught in a stream of strong and deep trial, and thrown into a seven-fold-heated furnace of persecution. His glad and hopeful countenance was soon clouded with care, his hymns of praise were changed into quick and urgent petitions, "his harp also was turned into mourning, and his organ into the voice of those that wail."

No sooner had David been anointed and received the gift of the Holy Spirit, than an evil spirit began to trouble Saul, and to haunt and terrify his mind. His physicians, as a relief, recommending the influence of music, the king gave orders that a skilful musician should be found for him and brought to his court. One of his attendants answered his need at the moment, "Behold I have seen a son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, who is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man and a man of war,* and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him." The young musician was presented to the king, who, finding his manners agreeable, and his music potent over the restless spirit that vexed him, loved him exceedingly, and desired his attendance so long as his trouble lasted, and whenever it returned. This sudden change in his life, his promotion as musician to the king,† as it was his first step in dignity, was also the beginning of his evils. Yet there were intervals in which he escaped from the care and intrigue of a court, for when the king was on business leading him from home, or when he forgot his melancholy in the turmoil of war, David returned to the shepherd life, which he was about to leave for ever. 1 Sam. xvii. 15.

One of the most striking passages of history, whether sacred or profane, is the encounter of David with the formidable Goliath of Gath. The one, however bold or vigorous, was a shepherd lad, while the other was a giant of vast proportions and of amazing bodily power. The one went forth to battle with the sling which he carried in his daily occupation, while the other was cased from head to foot in invulnerable mail, and armed as if for the single-handed destruction of a host. The incident in all its aspects is a matter of surprise. Yet this is only an instance of how the weak things of the world are chosen by God to confound the mighty.

Jesse had sent David to the camp of Israel, about fifteen miles distant from Bethlehem, with provisions for his three elder brothers, who were enrolled in the army. As he was marking the position of the two opposite hosts, he was astonished to behold Goliath striding over the plain, as he had done for forty days in succession, challenging the Israelites to send

* איש מלחמה (Ish Milchamah) does not necessarily imply one exercised in war, but only a strong man fitted for danger and battle, and to the name of "a man of war" David was entitled from the fact of his having slain a lion and a bear by strength of hand alone. The report of the attendant is an evidence of his rising renown, and the last clause of the recommendation, "the Lord is with him," was enough to win him the confidence of any man good or bad.

† The sacred narrative reads as follows: "And David came to Saul and stood before him, and he loved him exceedingly, and he became unto him an armour-bearer." 1 Sam. xvi. 21. The word כְּלִים (Chelim) denotes any sort of utensils, such as "dress, furniture, instruments of all kinds, civil and warlike." Gen. xxiv. 53; Isa. lxi. 10. That it specifically includes "musical instruments," see Ps. lxxi. 22, where בְּכֵלֵי נָבֶל (Bichly Nevel) means instruments of psaltery; see also Amos vi. 5, "Like David do they invent themselves כְּלֵי שִׁיר (Keley Shir) instruments of music." David therefore became, not Saul's armour-bearer, but the bearer of his musical instruments, that is, "the king's musician."

him forth a champion, and at the same time loudly blaspheming the God in whom they trusted. The words of his surprise and indignation, after incurring the ridicule of many, were at length reported to Saul and his chief general, Abner.* The king doubted and scrupled to let him go, but David, by relating his victory over the two monsters of the wilderness, reassured him, and laying aside the brazen armour of Saul, neither because of its amplitude nor of its weight, but simply because he had not proved it, sallied forth to meet the champion as he had met the lion and the bear. The Philistine came on with scoffs and blasphemies, threatening to deal with him as he had dealt with so many Israelites in former wars, but David, nerved with strength and confidence from on High, and running forward so as to gain an impetus to his missile, slang a stone, which plunged into the brain of his enemy, and brought the pride and glory of Philistia to the dust. The fall of their champion was the signal of flight and panic to the Philistines, who were pursued and thinned with a great slaughter up to the gates of their cities, while the victorious shepherd, heavy, but not overburdened with his spoils, came back from the field, and the head of the giant he carried to Jerusalem, and his armour he placed in his tent.

There is here said to be a difficulty, which British critics have called "great" and German cavillers have thought "an inconsistency," lying in the comparison of 1 Sam. xvii. 54, where it is related that David brought the head of the Philistine to Jerusalem; and 2 Sam. v. 6, and 1 Chron. xi. 4, where it is apparent that Jerusalem was at that time in the hands of the Jebusites. The difficulty is palpable; but no sooner is the true situation of Jerusalem at that time understood than it vanishes. Jerusalem, in the days of Joshua, consisted of several fortified citadels built on its several hills, and these were again all encircled by one great wall, and governed by one king. The king was killed in one of the engagements with Joshua. Josh. x. 23. Yet still the Jebusites kept possession of the cities. When the land was divided among the tribes of Israel, Judah and Benjamin had each a part of Jerusalem: each of them had a Jerusalem in his own portion. Josh. xv. 8, xviii. 16. The borders of the two tribes met at that spot, so that Benjamin had the western and northern parts, while Judah had the eastern and southern parts of the city. In the days of Joshua the Jebusites still remained in possession of the place; but in Judges i. 8 we read of the children of Judah taking Jerusalem, and setting the city on fire. This was the southern half, which Judah re-built and inhabited; and this was the Jerusalem into which David brought the head of Goliath. But Benjamin, being less powerful, could not expel the Jebusites from his portion, being defied by the almost impregnable fortification on Mount Zion. Judges i. 21. When Benjamin found his efforts ineffectual, and that the enemy, by sudden inroads into his territory, could work him serious harm, he would see the advantage of living in peace with his neighbours of the citadel, and

* It needs not be a matter of surprise that Saul, in these harassing times, and in his irritated state of mind, should not have recognised David in the altered gait and look produced in a young man in that space of time, however short it might have been. But it seems to me that the king was more anxious to know the name and station of the family to which the man belonged who had offered to fight the giant, seeing he had engaged to bestow his daughter on the victor. It was this feeling of jealous pride that prompted his question to Abner, "*whose son is this youth?*" It is probable that Abner, who was a Benjamite, and continually engaged among the troops, had seldom or never seen him before.

so Mount Zion was held by the Jebusites until the accession of David, who, wishing to unite the two Jerusalems into one metropolis, completed the conquest of Canaan by storming the fortress so long in the possession of the heathen. It is surprising how a circumstance so simple should have raised such laborious discussions.

After this defeat of the Philistines, Saul took David and permitted him no more to return to his pastoral duties at Bethlehem. But the chorus of the song with which the damsels had saluted them on their return through the cities, remained in his memory, and offended his self-love: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." From that moment the mind of the king was turned against the deliverer of himself and of the whole army from reproach and destruction. Afraid of his fame, and filled with jealousy, he kept him in sight; although the more he indulged his malice the more was he tortured by the evil spirit. David was again called to soothe him by his music, as he was wont to do, and, twice giving way to his passion, did the king launch his javelin at his life; but the Lord threw his shield before him, and he escaped away untouched. Seeing that his presence had more power to irritate than his harp to allay, and seeking a less odious plan of ridding himself of his enemy, he made him captain over a thousand soldiers, and sent him on dangerous expeditions, in the hope that he would, sooner or later, fall at the head of his troop. In this and other ways did Saul not cease from laying snares about the feet of his innocent rival, and the following Psalms very palpably belong to this stage of the History of David.

PS. LXIV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. VIII.

לְמַנְעַח (Lamnatseach), the Title of Dedication: "To the Chief Cause of all Events," or to Jehovah, the Governor of all.

(See Introduction, Part IV., at the end.)

A PSALM OF DAVID.

1. Hear, O God, my voice in my secret prayer;
From the terrible enemy preserve my life.

David could not complain openly and publicly against his unjust king, he could only seek relief from God in secret prayer. The word שֵׁיחַ (Siach), does not only mean "profound, silent meditation," but also "private or secret prayer," see Gen. xxiv. 63, where the rendering should be, "to pray in private in the field." In the same sense it is often found, as in Ps. lv. 2, "I mourn in my secret prayers." פָּחַד (Pachad) appears sometimes as a noun, sometimes as a verb; in both forms in Job iii. 25. It also denotes the object of reverence or fear, as in Gen. xxxi. 42, 53. In our verse it appears as an adjective, and refers to Saul, the object of David's fear and terror, who sought his life.

2. Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked,
From the machinations of the workers of iniquity,

3. Who whet their tongue like a sword ;
They direct their arrows for a bitter design :

The common rendering of דָּבָר מָר (Davor mor) by "bitter words" is twice incorrect ; 1st, דָּבָר does not signify " words," but " word," and, if " word" in the singular, it will not correspond with " arrows" in the plural ; 2d, דָּבָר מָר in verse 3, is quite the same with דָּבָר רָע of verse 5, where it is rendered "evil matter," but which should rather be as above, "wicked design." It might be still better rendered by "bitter or malicious design." "Davor" signifies *design* in Ps. cx. 4, where it is "after the order, plan, or design of."

4. To shoot in secret the blameless man,
Suddenly they hit him and do not fear.
5. They confirm themselves in their wicked design,
They commune how to hide the snares,—
They say, who shall see them ?

He had at first spoken of one chief "terrible enemy" Saul, but we now find that he had many more enemies to dread, even a number of wicked and malicious men about the court, who, envious and afraid of his reputation, as slanderers shot at and wounded him in secret, and who, by their false accusations, put a sword into the hand of Saul to slay him. They do not fear because they have the king at their head, and although their first plan fail, they continue to talk of fresh snares, and confirm themselves in aiming at his destruction.

6. Let them disguise their crimes,
Let them accomplish an entire dissimulation,
Be the privacy and heart of man ever so deep :

The word חָפֵּשׂ (Chephes), which appears three times in this verse, denotes "disguisement and dissimulation." The imperative י (Yod) prefixed to the first verb יַחְפְּשׁוּ (Yachpesu), "let them disguise," belongs also to the verb יִתְמַנּוּ (Tamnu), "let them accomplish," as if it were יִתְמַנּוּ (Yitamnu), which non-repetition is very common in Hebrew poetry. These forms of the verb are here conjoined with the idea of threatening a retribution for their wicked plots.

7. But when God shoots an arrow at them,
Suddenly shall they be smitten ;

The parallel here drawn between the nature of their wickedness and the punishment about to overtake them is most accurate. They shot arrows at him, killing him with a partial wound ; but when the Lord shoots at them, his arrows will be mortal. They whetted their tongue like a sword against

him, but they are confounded by their own tongue, for their accusations recoil twofold on themselves.

8. And their own tongue shall bring confusion upon them,
That all who see them shall be astonished.
9. And all men shall fear and declare the work of God,
When they understand that this is his doing.

They indeed had done all in secret and in disguise, so that men did not discover it until God had put forth his hand and dealt out to them punishment adapted to their offences, which at last exposed their wickedness and brought the fear of God on all the believers.

10. The righteous shall rejoice in Jehovah, and trust in Him,
And all the upright in heart shall glory.

The prediction of the punishment which would overtake his enemies as given forth in the 7th verse of this Psalm, is certainly remarkable. On the mountains of Gilboa did it receive its literal fulfilment, when about seven years afterwards, Saul, and many of David's enemies with him, fell under the arrows which God showered upon them from the bows of the Philistines. Thus men would begin to understand how the Lord will always save his own, and would tremble to plot against them; and all the upright in heart would glory in such a manifest proof of his faithfulness. Such was the end of David's enemies; but the Messiah, his Antitype, although more innocent than he, had enemies even more wicked, who slandered, and persecuted, and scourged, and crucified him. His deliverance was even more wonderful than David's, and the confusion brought on his enemies by their own tongues, "his blood be upon us and upon our children," was yet more astonishing, while the righteous had an argument yet more powerful for putting their trust in God.

The next Psalm, according to common order, is the cxi., which agrees very much in style and sentiment with the foregoing, speaking also of the wickedness of his great enemy, and of the plots and machinations of his rivals at court. This Psalm is peculiar in repeatedly changing the terms in which he speaks of his enemies from singular to plural, and *vice versa*. It is divided into *four* parts by three Selahs, which Selahs also denote that the Psalm was among those given out for the choirs of the Temple service. The dedicatory title is the same as in the preceding.

PS. CXL. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. IX.

(Lamnatzeach) "To the chief cause of all Events."

(See the end of Introduction.)

A PSALM OF DAVID.

1. Deliver me, O Jehovah, from the wicked man,
From the man of violence preserve me;
2. Who contrive mischief in their heart
To stir up war all the day.
3. They sharpen their tongue like a serpent,
The poison of adders is under their lips. Selah, continually;

In the first verse the reference is solely to Saul, but in the following verses the plotters of mischief are indicated by the plural number. Here it is seen that it was his court enemies who stirred up the wars, and advised Saul to send David so often into battles and skirmishes, that one day or another he might meet with his death. Thus he was well aware of the design with which such occasions of war were sought for him by his enemies, yet he had too much confidence in the protecting presence of God to shun them. This part of the Psalm ends with a *Selah*, which (as is largely shown in the close of Introduction, Part IV.), belongs to the sense of the passage, as well as serving to mark the musical pause in the performance.

4. Keep me, O Jehovah, from the hands of the wicked,
From the man of violence preserve me,
Who devise to overthrow my goings.

The literal translation of this phrase would perhaps be clearer when rendered, "who have calculated to shove down my steps, or my feet," who have planned and attempted my downfall.

5. The proud have hidden a trap with cords for me,
They have spread a net by the side of the encampment :
Gins have they set for me. *Selah*, continually !

In the fifth verse he complains of his enemies, that the nets with which they seek to entangle his feet they have extended even to the side of the encampment where he lies with his soldiers. The word *עגול* (*agol*) means, anything of a shape round or somewhat spherical (1 Kings vii. 31, 35); and as the camps in those times were formed in an orb, the prince or commander having his tent in the centre, with the troops lodged in outer and outer circles all round him, the encampment was called *מעגל* (*Maagol*), 1 Sam. xxvi. 5, 7. There was "a trap hidden for him with cords;" a trap being sunk into some frequented path, and always covered over with grass or brushwood, and having long cords attached to each side, by which the hunter, lurking at a little distance, might close it whenever he saw the game stepping on the spot. But the net spread for him by his enemies extended to the very "side of the encampment," which indicates, that even among the soldiers lying around him, there were some who had been bribed and persuaded to watch and betray him.

6. I have said unto Jehovah, Thou art my God.
Give ear, O Jehovah, to the voice of my supplication.
7. Jehovah, my Lord, Power of my salvation,
Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.
8. Grant not, O Jehovah, the desires of the wicked ;
Enable them not to effect their devices,
Lest they exalt themselves. *Selah*, continually !

By the expression, "I have said unto Jehovah, Thou art my God," he means that he has formally and really acknowledged Jehovah as his God, and that he is resolved to acknowledge him always as such, and that what-

ever towers of false refuge his enemies had built for themselves, it was in Jehovah he would place his confidence, and to him alone would he look expecting protection and guidance in his need. The clause in the seventh verse, "Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle," we believe to have a reference to his encounter with Goliath. A captain or prince had always beside him in battle an armour-bearer, whose duty it was "to cover his master's head," that is, to ward off with the shield the blows aimed at his head, and which, in the heat of the fight, had escaped his own notice. The words **בְּיוֹם נִשֶּׁק** (Beyom nashek), translated "in the day of battle," signifies more literally "in the day of clashing," a vivid intimation of a battle, and in this case an allusion to the clang and noise of the giant's armour as he strode to meet David. But Jehovah had covered the head of one so defenceless, and had enabled him to pierce his enemy's head (perhaps even through his visor) with a stone.

9. The chief Governor of all my events,
Shall cover them with the mischief of their own lips.

רֹאשׁ (Rosh) "a head," hence signifies a "captain, prince, or governor," such being all heads in their several stations. Exod. vi. 14, 23; Num. xiv. 4; Judges xi. 8, 9, 11; 2 Chron. xiii. 12; Nehem. ix. 17. **סִבָּה** (Sibah), denotes "to turn round, a thing turned about, or an event." So in 1 Sam. xxii. 22. **אָנֹכִי סִבֹּתִי** (Anochi Sabothi) "I brought about the event against all the souls of thy father's house." So 1 Kings xii. 15, "Wherefore the king hearkened not . . . for it was **סִבָּה** (Sibah), an event brought about by the Lord." So in our passage, after David had described the malice of his enemies, he says, "But the chief Governor of all my events,"—He who directs me in all my ways, shall cover them, *i. e.*, his enemies, &c.

10. Burning coals shall be stirred upon them;
Into the fire shall he cast them,
Into the chasms of the earth, where they shall never rise again.
11. The man of a slandering tongue he shall not establish on earth;
The man of rapacious violence he shall hunt to destruction.
12. I know that Jehovah will maintain the plea of the poor,
And the just cause of the needy.
13. Surely the righteous shall praise thy name,
The upright shall dwell in thy presence.

There is here another prediction of the Spirit regarding the frightful doom of the wicked. But while the predictions in a former Psalm referred to the punishment to overtake the persecutors of David, the penalties spoken of in this place may well be understood of the sufferings of the wicked in a future state of being. Let the man of violence and blood, the slanderer, and the persecutor, and the unjust, look into the mirror of this oracle, and exclaim, "Who shall dwell with devouring fire, who with everlasting burnings?"

There is yet a third Psalm, which, from its internal evidence, appearing to belong to the same period of distress, we will therefore give it in the present connection.

PS. LXXXVI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. X.

A PRAYER OF DAVID.

1. Incline, O Jehovah, thine ear ;
Answer me, for I am miserable and destitute.
2. Preserve my soul, for I am a devoted man.
Save, O my God, thy servant, who trusteth in thee.
3. Be gracious unto me, O my Lord,
For unto thee do I cry all the day.
4. Gladden the soul of thy servant,
For unto thee, my Lord, my soul I lift ;
5. For thou, O Lord, art good and forgiving,
And plenteous in mercy to all who call on thee.
6. Accept, O Jehovah, my prayer,
Attend also to the voice of my supplications.
7. Whenever I am in distress I shall call on thee,
For thou wilt surely answer me.

When Adam was created his chief religious duty was praise, but of his fallen child, the chief duty, feeling his helplessness and misery, is to supplicate for mercy. In the second verse we see the difference between the prayer of one who calls upon Jehovah for the first time, and the prayer of one who knows him already, and has had good reason for putting his trust in him. Both of them must appear in the same attitude, it is true, but he only to whom has been given "the white stone" of acceptance, can discern the relation in which he stands to the Holy One of Israel. David prays for salvation because he is חָסִיד (chasid), "a devoted or dedicated man," one who has given himself up with his life and all his affections to God. The word expresses more strongly the meaning of the word קֹדֶשׁ (Kodesh), "holy," that is to say, "consecrated," but by no means free from accountability, or having a title to claim any benefit as a right, but he comes to Jehovah (verse 5) as סֹלֶחַ (Saloch), originally "a forgiver." "Unto thee, my Lord, my soul I lift," intimates that he had brought himself to the Lord as a living sacrifice, even as the *heave-offering* in the tabernacle—to show that it belonged to God and to his altar, and, that man had no part in it—was lifted up by the hands of the priests.

8. There is none among the gods like thee O Jehovah !
And there is nothing like unto thy works.
9. All heathen nations whom thou hast made
Shall come and worship before thee, O Lord,
And shall ascribe glory to thy name.

10. For thou art great, and a performer of wonderful things;
For thou art God, thou alone.

This Psalm is indeed entitled "a prayer of David," but could that devoted servant of God engage in prayer without magnifying the greatness of the Being in whom he trusted. From this point, by a natural transition, his mind takes flight to the conversion of the heathen nations who, together with the people of Israel, were equally the children of God. From an observation of his wonderful works, they shall be brought to see that Jehovah is God alone; and which of his works is more wonderful, or more fitted to effect this end than the plan of redemption? What more godlike than the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Saviour? The lifting up of Jesus on the cross was therefore to be the power by which all nations should be drawn to God at last, to acknowledge that he is God, and he alone!

11. Direct me, O Jehovah, in thy way,
That I may walk in thy truth;
Confirm my heart to reverence thy name.
12. I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,
And I will honour thy name for evermore;
13. For thy mercy is great towards me,
And thou shalt deliver my soul from the lowest hell.

The primary meaning of שְׁאוֹל (Sheol) is a dark abyss of unknown depth under ground, covered over, and hence beyond the view or the imagination of man. Deut. xxxii. 22; Job xi. 8; Ps. cxxxix. 8; Ezek. xxxi. 17; Amos ix. 2. Hence, it is figuratively used to describe the grave, as a place of darkness, and concealment, and negation. Gen. xlii. 38, xliv. 29—31. It is then further extended to denote the common receptacle of the dead, as if all go alike to the unknown abyss, which is understood by "Sheol." But the leading idea conveyed by this word, according to its different contexts, shows it to be further applicable to "hell," that place of retribution to which the wicked, soul and body, are consigned. Ps. ix. 17, lv. 15; and in this sense it is used by Christ when he says, "to destroy both soul and body in hell." Matth. x. 28; Luke xii. 5. So likewise, on the other hand, although the word was often used in a wide and indefinite sense, yet it was always understood that the soul of the righteous was not allowed to go down to Sheol, but delivered and taken up to the Lord.

The prayer in these verses is spiritual. How incorrect therefore is the rendering of the last line in the past tense, seeing that the whole prayer, whether for temporal or spiritual blessings, is in the present and future tense. Since the mercy of God had been greatly manifested towards him in time, he was entitled to take this as a pledge that he would not be forsaken in eternity.

14. O God, the presumptuous are arisen against me,
And the companies of the violent seek my soul;
And they have not set thee before them.

The import of the expression **וְלֹא שָׂמִינָהּ לָנֶגְדָם** (*Velo Sainucha Lenegdom*), "and they have not set thee before them," is this, that they had not based their motive for persecuting David, on the will of God. They had acted as if there were no God and no judge to repay them.

15. But thou, O Lord, art a God compassionate and gracious,
Long-suffering, and abundant in mercy and truth.
16. O regard me, and be gracious unto me ;
Grant thy mighty help unto thy servant,
And save the son of thine handmaid.
17. Make of me a monument of thy goodness,
So that they who hate me may see it and be ashamed,
When thou, Jehovah, hast helped and comforted me.

The word **אוֹת** (*oth*), besides its other significations, denotes "a miraculous sign," *Exod. iv. 8, 9, 17, 28, 30 ; viii. 23 ; x. 1—2*. But there was often, for one purpose or other, a miraculous sign given to the servants of God as "a token," and hence in some places the word is justly rendered "token." But in the above verse it cannot be so rendered without doing violence to the scope of the passage. How can any translators bring out "show me," out of the Hebrew words **עָשִׂהָ עִמִּי** (*asey imi*), which clearly mean neither more nor less than "make with me," or "make of me." When taken along with **אוֹת** they must signify, "make with me a sign to others for good," or more freely, "make of me a monument of thy goodness." Make of me such a sign or monument of good that all my enemies may be arrested by it, and be daunted at injuring a man so assisted by the Lord.

In the former scene of David's history we have seen how he was introduced to the notice of the Jewish nation by the deliverance he wrought out for them in slaying Goliath. We have also seen how this very event became the origin of his trials and persecutions, by infixing a deadly hatred and jealousy in the bosom of Saul. The son of Kish was resolved on nothing less than removing him out of his way, and, seeing that his javelin had erred, he sent him with a small troop on dangerous expeditions, in the hope that the hands of the Philistines might not fail as his own had done. But the breast of David, although exposed in battle, was well shielded by God, and the success which waited on all his enterprises, and the numerous victories which he gained over his enemies, yet the more grieved and tormented the mind of Saul. "And David prospered in all his ways, and the Lord was with him ; wherefore, when Saul saw that he prospered exceedingly, he was afraid of him." *1 Sam. xviii. 14, 15*. The hatred of the king, fostered and increased as it was by fear, arose to such a height, that no plan was too mean and deceitful, and no sacrifice too great or too personal, if by any means he might accomplish his destruction. He gave him in marriage his own daughter Michal, at the same time with the inhuman design of soon turning her bridal joy into mourning : "And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare for him, and that the hand of the Philistines may reach him." *1 Sam. xviii. 21*. Seeing his present scheme abortive ; for David fought twice against the Philistines with suc-

cess, and returned triumphantly, gaining the admiration of the people, and the friendship of the godly prince Jonathan, and the devoted love of his royal spouse, and every circumstance seemingly hostile resulting in his favour; "Saul was yet the more afraid of David, and became his enemy continually." Laying aside all secret snares, he resolved on attempts at open violence, and therefore enjoined his son and all his attendants to seize some opportunity of slaying David. The just and tender prince recoiled from such a crime, and instead of obeying, pleaded so warmly and touchingly the cause of his friend and brother-in-law, that Saul, a man originally magnanimous and gentle, moved with a temporary relenting, swore that, as the Lord lived, he should not be slain. 1 Sam. xix. 6.

Soon afterwards a new war arising, a great battle was fought with the Philistines, who suffered so severely as to be disabled for years, and David returned victoriously at the head of his army. But while the humblest soldier enjoyed the honour and peace of his home, the young commander was called into the presence of his most deadly enemy. The mind of Saul was again troubled, and the music of his son-in-law failing to compose him, he made his second madman-like attempt "to smite him even unto the wall with his javelin," but David escaping fled to his own house. But his house was no refuge, for thither he was immediately followed by the emissaries of the king, who were ordered to watch the house during the whole night, and to despatch him when attempting to leave it in the morning. In this critical position, when the strongest mind might have been overcome, and when the most lion-like heart might have trembled, the son of Jesse, by the spirit within him, had been enabled to keep himself above despair, and to compose the following Psalm for generations yet unborn.

Ps. lix. has for its title the following superscription: לְמִנְצֵחַ (Lamnat-seach), before explained, and אֶל תַּשְׁחֶת לְדָוִד (al Tashcheth Le David.)

The phrase will be better understood after examining more closely the situation in which the Psalm was composed. David's danger had reached a great height, he looked upon himself as one in great extremity. Shut up in his own house, watched by a band only waiting the day-light to slay him, and his mind nearly overwhelmed with the fear of death, he yet through faith lays hold on the promises of God, who was almighty to protect him. The Holy Spirit covered him with the cheering and soothing shadow of his wings. Thus strengthened and inspired with a new and holy confidence, he exclaims "Al Tashcheth Le David"—"Thou shalt not destroy David." Thou strong and bloody Saul, with all thine instruments of death, shalt not be able to destroy David, who is protected by the God of heaven. The same superscription is to be found in the titles of two other Psalms, and both composed in a position equally dangerous. Pss. lvii. and lviii., which emanated from his extremity in the cave of Engedi, when Saul surrounded the cave with his soldiers and afterwards entered it himself. 1 Sam. xxiv. 1—5. These three Psalms, therefore, originating in like circumstances of danger, have in their superscriptions the same phrase, "Thou shalt not destroy David."*

* The three Psalms above are not only alike in their titles and circumstances of composition, but also in style, and in the order in which they were given out for the Temple service. When they were delivered to the musicians, one melody must have been appointed for them,

But there is another word common to these three titles, which is מִכְתָּם (Michtam), and concerning which many and conflicting opinions have been proposed and defended. The derivation of the word is very easily seen when we compare it with מִכְתָּב (Michtov), which means "a written document" on parchment or other like material (2 Chron. xxi. 12, xxxvi. 22; Is. xxxviii. 9; and this word is derived from the verb כָּתַב (Kethov), "to write." Precisely the same form has the word "Michtam." It is derived from כֶּתֶם (Kethem), which, when a verb, is "to stamp or engrave," and when a noun, "a stamp or engraving." (Hence it sometimes denotes "gold," which had always to be marked or stamped as a sign of its purity and genuineness. So in Jer. ii. 22, נִכְתָּם עֲוֹנֶיךָ לְפָנַי (Nichtam Avonech Lephantai). "Thine iniquity is marked or engraved before me," that is, God had before him *engraved in his memory* the iniquity of Israel. Turning now to Michtam, as it stands in the titles of these three Psalms, and recalling the circumstances of peril and distress in which they were composed, circumstances denying him the aid of writing materials, and the composure of mind needful for their use, we now arrive at the solution of the difficulty. The Psalms were thrown off in the haste and excitement of the moment (of which their style is sufficient proof), and during the process of composition committed to memory, until, the temporary storm being over, they could afterwards be committed to writing. A Michtam Psalm is therefore *one engraved in the memory*, instead of being written on parchment, or engraved in the usual way.

The same title of Michtam was also given to a song intended for use on any such occasion as a national thanksgiving to the Lord for some signal benefit, as then it had to be committed to memory by the people against the appointed day. Ps. lx., which is a song of triumph after a great victory, has in its title מִכְתָּם לְלִמֵּד (Michtam Le Lamed), *i.e.*, a Psalm of David to be engraved on the memory by learning it from the teaching of others. Ps. xvi. is also called a Michtam of David, and in its beauty and sublimity, and in the depth of Messianic revelation it contains, we find a reason for the title. It must have been a favourite song with David, continually in his memory and continually on his lips, being an expression of hopes dear to his own soul, and celebrating as it does the resurrection of Messiah, his son.

PS. LIX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XI.

To the Chief Cause of all Events. Thou shalt not destroy David. A Psalm composed and engraved on the memory, when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.

1. Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God ;
Make me higher and stronger than those who rise against me.

which would become known by the name of the "Al Tascheth" melody. This explains why one of the Asaphitic Psalms (Ps. lxxv.) is found with this title, not because composed on a like occasion, but because written in the same style with the above three Psalms, and therefore fitted to the well-known "Al Tascheth" melody.

The word שָׁגֹב (Sagov), denotes something "high and strong." See Deut. ii. 36, "There was not a city too high and too strong for us." Isa. xxx. 13, "A breach in a high and strong wall." The same word, Isa. ii. 11, 17, is applied to God, "Jehovah alone shall be high and strong in that day." In the above passage, the rendering of Sagov by any such word as "superior" would fall much below its full import.

2. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity,
And save me from blood-thirsty men.
3. For lo, they lie waiting for my soul;
The mighty have lodged themselves around me;
Not for my transgression, nor for my crime, O Jehovah!

The word גָּר (Gor) means either "to dwell," or "lodge occasionally" at any place. "The mighty are *gathered* against me," fails in conveying the perseverance and fixeness of purpose shown by his enemies in besieging the house for a length of time. We cannot help noticing with grief the ignorance, if not perversity, of some critics, who, in defiance of title and evidence, have denied this Psalm to have been composed on the occasion specified, though a child who is acquainted with that event in David's history could not fail to find out the occasion of the Psalm from its first three verses alone.

4. Without my fault, they hurry and prepare themselves formidably,
Awake to meet me, and behold.
5. Even thou, Jehovah, Lord of hosts, thou God of Israel,
Arise to give charge unto all nations:
Pity none of those who cloak their wickedness Selah, continually.

He calls on God, who is the searcher of the hearts of men, to awake and behold his danger, and deliver him, for he was innocent of crime or transgression towards the king, or towards those others who sought his life. In this, as in former Psalms, there are indications that at court he had many enemies (as, what rising and prospering man has not?) who not only stimulated the fury of Saul by slanders and accusations, but even took counsel together and laid schemes of their own for his ruin. David therefore calls upon the God of Israel to arise and give a charge to the heathen nations round about to execute the divine judgments on his persecutors, those blood thirsty and deceitful men of Israel. That the Hebrew word פָּקַד (Pakod), in all its different shapes, was also used with the meaning "to put in charge," or "to be charged with an office" of any kind, see Gen. xxxix. 4; Lev. xxvi. 16; Num. iii. 10; Job xxxiv. 13, xxxvi. 23; Esth. ii. 3; Jer. xl. 7. Some critics who did not, or would not, understand this secondary meaning of the word, however frequent, but read it as it is erroneously given in the authorised version, "awake to visit all the heathen," have taken advantage of this clause, and have not been ashamed, in spite of the title and in spite of the strong internal evidence, to maintain that this Psalm could not have been composed at the time indicated; for

what, they ask, had David in such a position to do with the heathen? But pious critics, even in their ignorance of the real meaning of *Pakod*, have said, that although David himself had at that time to fear no other nation than his own, still the Spirit within might have looked forward to the Greater David, and whose persecutors have been and still are composed of different nations. This is known to be the case in many Psalms, which, though bearing an immediate reference to David's enemies, yet speak in a larger sense of the enemies of Christ and of his church. But if critics be ignorant both of the Hebrew text, and of the right and proper applications of the Spirit, then they are but ill qualified for the task they have undertaken of expounding the oracles of God. But the real meaning of the verse is this: David calls upon the Lord to appoint instruments for the punishment of these his wicked and blood-thirsty enemies, even to give charge to גִּיּוֹמִים (*Goyim*), "the heathen nations," to scourge them. Then he adds, "Pity none of those who cloak their wickedness. Selah," continually, or always. (For Selah, see end of Introduction.)

If we now take into consideration the uproar of which Saul's residence must have been on that evening the scene, when the populace saw what was transacting there, where they knew the king's son-in-law, their deliverer, was watched to be killed—the tumult of his enemies who ran up and down the city devising new plans how they might destroy him, and ever and anon returning to observe whether the watch were faithfully kept—and if we keep in mind that the agitated and overwhelmed prisoner could see through the windows the ceaseless activity of his foes as they went and came, we will more fully comprehend the meaning and import of the following verses:—

6. They shall yet return in the evening,
And howling like dogs they shall hurry about the city.

The word עֶרֶב (*Erev*) also denotes, as in Isa. xxiv. 11, "thick darkness," in which sense it may be taken here. "They shall return when it is dark."

7. Behold they shall foam with their mouth,
Having swords in their lips;
But who shall heed them?

That the particle כִּי (*Ki*) not seldom stands in place of *but*, see Exod. xvi. 8; Deut. xi. 7; Ruth i. 10; 1 Sam. x. 19.

8. And thou, Jehovah, shalt laugh at them,
Thou, who makest scorn of all nations.

The agitated prisoner, looking out through the windows and marking the watchfulness and activity of his enemies; and having already laid his plan of escaping in the dusk of the evening (in which he succeeded)—these striking verses describe the fury of their disappointment at the issue. They would howl like dogs when bereft of their prey. They would run to and fro through the city in pursuit of him, with oaths and curses reproaching each other, and threatening on David an extreme vengeance when found.

But, says the Psalmist, when I am escaped and beyond their reach, "who shall heed them?" The eighth verse, when the clauses are transposed will appear more forcible: "And thou, Jehovah, who makest scorn of all nations, thou shalt laugh at them."

9. O my Strength, for thee will I watch—
For God is my high fortress.

Here we approve of the LXX. version, and of the readings in different MSS., in acknowledging יָצִי (Izi), "my strength," as the original of the text, instead of יָצִי (Izo), "his strength," which after any explanation that may be offered still leaves the verse unintelligible. (In verse 17 it is also יָצִי, Izi.)

10. The God that showeth me mercy shall go before me ;
God shall make me gaze upon those who watch for me.

David knew well that without the help of God he could never be able to effect his escape, he therefore describes himself as waiting and watching until God should come, and go before him, and open a way for him through his enemies. Such being his strength and expectation, he would thus be enabled to watch them from the window, and gaze upon them freely and without terror, as if they were lifeless statues, unable to stir a hand or foot for his hurt.

11. Slay them not, lest my people forget it :—
Make them stagger by thy power,
And bring them down, O Lord our shield !

He prays that the watchers might not be slain that night, lest it should raise a suspicion against some of his own friends, and the people should forget that the hand of the Almighty alone was concerned in his escape. His request is, that they might be so confounded, as were the men of Sodom when they beset the house of Lot, so struck with blindness, or sleep, or confusion, as to fall down and present no obstacle to his flight ; and, like the men of Sodom, left to the common doom awaiting all such wickedness not afar off.

12. For the sins of their mouth, the drying of their lips ; and because of the cursing and of the lies which they speak : and when they are ensnared in their very pride :—
13. Then destroy them in thy wrath, destroy them that they be no more ; and that it be known even to the ends of the earth,—that God ruleth in Jacob, Selah, for ever !

The reader will observe that two clauses have been transposed in these verses. In Hebrew poetry the middle clause of the verse often conveys the full force of a conclusion,—the scope and purpose of the verse being as it were concentrated in it, so that in any other language its clear and proper place is at the end. This structure has been the occasion of many dif-

faculties to critics in comprehending and bringing out the meaning and tendency of such passages, and we trust that by this simple arrangement we have made these verses intelligible to any reader. The leading idea in them is, that the Lord should wait, as if, until the cup of these wicked men be full, until by their cursings and lying (the sins of their mouth), and by the sinful driving of their lips, they be ensnared in their own pride; and that then, he should consume them in his righteous indignation, whereby his name would be feared and praised to the ends of the earth. David next describes once more the disappointment of his enemies, when they should run about the city and not find their victim, and then expresses his resolution to sing praises to the Lord for his protecting grace.

14. They shall yet return in the evening,—and, howling like dogs, they shall hurry about the city.
15. They shall prowl about for their food,—they shall growl when they are not gorged.
16. But I shall sing of thy power; and proclaim thy grace in the morning: When thou hast been an high fortress to me; and a refuge in the day of my distress.
17. O my Strength, to thee will I sing: for God is mine high fortress: O thou God who shewest mercy to me!

When David had ended pleading his cause before Jehovah his only defence, and relieved his excited soul in the utterance of the above Psalm, the evening had fallen thickly on the earth and afforded him an opportunity of escape. Whether he hesitated, or conceived a sudden hope of reconciliation, is not said; but Michal, who knew the rooted animosity of her father, urged his departure, telling him, "If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou shalt be slain." By her tender assistance, "he was let down through a window," and God having doubtless answered his prayer by in some way confusing or misleading his enemies, he fled from Gibeah to Ramah, the city of Samuel, where resided that faithful servant of God who had anointed him in his name. Here in the house of the prophet would be committed to writing the above Psalm, at first only engraved in the memory. The persecuted guest brought danger with him to his host, so to keep his presence with him as secret as possible, Samuel took him and went down and dwelt for a time in Naioth, a village at some distance from Ramah. But the news of his whereabouts reaching the ears of Saul, he sent one company of messengers after another to take him, and each company, from the first to the third, on coming within sight of Samuel standing at the head of the prophets, was seized by the Spirit of God, and also began to prophesy themselves. The king, impatient at their delay, started to secure his rival in person, but coming to the great well of Sechu, and hearing of the report of what was doing at Ramah, he also was seized with the Spirit, and prophesied until he came to Naioth, where he fell down in a trance, and lay motionless all day and all night before Samuel.

David, escaping the present peril, sought an interview with his friend Jonathan. They met and consoled with each other in their affliction, when the prince agreed to make a final test of the disposition of his father to-

wards David, and a last meeting to communicate the result was appointed to take place in a field by the Rock of Ezel. David remained lurking near the spot, and on the morning of the third day heard the voice of his friend calling aloud in a language too well understood, "Is not the arrow beyond thee? make speed, haste, stay not." The intercession of Jonathan had been of no avail. The javelin twice hurled at the son-in-law had now been once cast at the son. The signal agreed on had told all that the one had to teach or the other to learn, and the two friends, feeling the hour of separation to be come, embraced each other and wept, and then parted in peace, calling on the Lord to be between them and their seed for ever.

Now was the unhappy son of Jesse an outcast and an exile from the land of his birth, driven by the unreasonable fury of the king away from his wife and home and country, to seek refuge among strangers. Flying for his life, he came, faint and hungry, to Nob, the city of the priests, where Ahimelech received him doubtfully but kindly, gave him some loaves of the hallowed bread, and armed him with the sword of Goliath, which David had formerly brought to be laid up behind the Ephod, as a memorial of his victory.* Thus encouraged, he continued his flight; but the prophet Amos, in speaking of the day of coming judgment on his nation, describes the position of danger into which they soon hurried, "As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; and when he went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall, a serpent bit him." Amos v. 19. David had twice escaped the paws (and the spear) of the *lion* Saul, and at his own house had nearly fallen a prey to the *bears*. He was nearly seized in the house of Sannuel, but preserved by a miraculous interposition of God. But in seeking a safer distance from these persecutors, he unhappily directed his steps towards Philistia, and in the *house* of the man (Achish King of Gath), with whom he sought shelter, he fell into a danger as deadly, from the serpent-like accusations of the courtiers. He was soon recognised by some of that nation as their mightiest enemy—the man who had slain their tens of thousands in killing their champion, and who had smitten them in many a sore battle since. Now that he was at their mercy, the opportunity of retaliation on Israel was too good to be lost, for "Is not this David the king of the land?" We need remain in no doubt that he was immediately on this discovery seized and bound, cast into prison, and kept securely, until he should be brought out for trial, and to hear their decision on his fate, for one of his Psalms, according to its title, was composed in the prison of Gath.

To this Psalm, the lvi., according to the common version, belongs the following superscription: "To the chief Musician, upon tonath-elim-rechokim, Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath." This obscure but interesting title has always been a favourite bone of contention among commentators, more especially as to the meaning of the words *Jonath-elim-rechokim*.† Without pausing to expose the more glaring mis-

* In 1 Sam. xvii. 54, it is stated that David put the armour of Goliath in his tent. Very likely David took it again with him when he went to Nob, after his victory, to worship God for his mighty aid and deliverance, and there he left the sword of Goliath in the tabernacle for a memorial, which sword he took again on the above occasion.

† We may simply notice two of the groundless interpretations of the title in question. "The dove of the far terebinth;" which is distant enough from the truth. "The oppression of the handful, or of the little flock, among the strangers;" which may belong to the interpreter, but certainly not to David.

takes, we may observe, that the best and nearest explanation we have seen is that given by Luther, whose devotion to the Psalter is well known. He says that the words יונת אלם רחוקים (Yonath Elem Rechokim), signify "a mute dove among the strangers," i.e. that David in his position at Gath was as a dove among strangers, so forlorn, so defenceless, yet so quiet. This opinion has so much in its favour that it gives the literal meaning of the two words (Jonath Elem) "The mute dove;" but even if we render *Rechokim*, "strangers," the question arises, where shall we find the Hebrew for "among." But if we turn to the contents of the Psalm, and particularly to the 4th and 10th verses, where the author glories in a revelation made to him by God, we may well expect the superscription to contain some emblem of the subject of that revelation, a revelation remaining unexplained in the body of the Psalm, and along with the title being a mystery to the ancients. But since we live in the days of New Testament light, and knowing that the chief thing in which David gloried was his promised descendant Immanuel; and if, in the contents of the Psalm, we discover any marked allusion to him, we are then surely led to seek in the above title some allegory of him. We must therefore get first at the literal meaning of this sacred poem, and ascertain the revelation of the Spirit made to David, and then we shall be assisted in seeking an explanation of the title.

PS. LVI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XII.

1. Be gracious unto me, O God, for man hath exhausted me :
All day long the antagonist crusheth me.

The word here rendered "to exhaust" is taken from the verb שָׁאֵף (Shaoph), which signifies "to draw in eagerly the breath, to gasp or pant, hence to aspire with a strong yearning." Job vii. 2, "as a slave is panting for the shade." Ps. cxix. 131. It means equally "to suck up, to snuff up," as above, to suck up or absorb one's strength, and thus exhaust him. It should thus be rendered, Job v. 5, "to exhaust their substance;" and the same, Amos viii. 4.

Such is the complaint of the weary and overwhelmed prisoner, remembering the frightful dangers through which he had passed in so short a time, one calamity following another, one enemy rising up after another; and now in a dark prison of the Philistines, expecting no better fate than that of Samson, to have his eyes put out and be forced to grind like a slave! It seemed as if some formidable antagonist had stood over him, heaping upon him calamity upon calamity, and distress upon distress, till now at last he was well-nigh spent, and his life was almost crushed out.

2. Mine adversaries are likewise exhausted daily :
Because there are many warriors for me on high.
3. In the day when I am afraid will I put in Thee my confidence.

The word לִחְמִים (Lochmim), may either be considered as a noun, "warriors," or as a verb, "that make war;" and the clause may be read as in the text, or, "Because many make war for me on high."

We have here an example of the highest consolation coming out of the midst of the deepest affliction. There is a Rock of Refuge found in the whirl and roar of an engulfing ocean. It was the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, who visited the prisoner and lifted his soul above his distress. When the servant of Elisha looked on the Syrian army drawn around the city, and trembled, the prophet opened his eyes and showed him the mountain full of chariots of fire and horses of fire round about his master, then he understood his meaning when he said, "Fear not, for they that be *with us* are more than they that be *with them*." In like manner the eyes of the trembling David had been opened by the Spirit, and watching over his safety he saw a multitude of the hosts of heaven, and from the depth of his prison he exclaims, "There are many warriors for me on high," or as well, "there are many that fight for me on high." The word רַבִּים (Rabim), to denote the multitude of heavenly auxiliaries, is employed in this as well as in the case of Elisha. It is the same word in Ps. lv. 18: "for in multitudes they were with me," *i.e.*, the invisible legions of angels. Well, therefore, might David profess, "In the day when I am afraid I will put in Thee my confidence." But he comes to make a more distinct revelation of the ground of his confidence, and of that which gives him so unquestionable a proof of his deliverance.

[These verses have been found difficult to render by all commentators alike. Those who had but as much knowledge of the Hebrew, as to see the difficulty, have only exercised their skill to make the matter worse. Hengstenberg, for instance, the great scholar of Germany, has favoured us with the following translation: "Be gracious unto me, God, for there snuffs after me man: always oppresses me the eater: my adversaries snuff after me continually: for many eaters have I proud." We scarcely know which the most to wonder at, the meaninglessness or the perverseness of this interpretation. A greater absurdity, issuing from the pen of one otherwise so learned—a more preposterous translation, by which the sublime meaning of the words is utterly perverted and their literal sense overthrown, we have never before met with. But what is still worse, he seeks to establish this translation by an exposition which outstrips it in absurdity; for, among other things, he says, "The two expressions of *snuffing* and *eating*, appear to the Psalmist as so singularly fitted to move God to compassion regarding his desperate condition, that he repeats them in verse 2." Such is the taste which German authors wish to favour the sweet singer of Israel with; but truly, if he could be permitted to see Hengstenberg's translation of these two verses, he might be disposed to smile more heartily at it than we were when we read it.]

4. בְּאֱלֹהִים (Be Elohim), In the Godhead do I boast of His Word :

In the Godhead do I put my trust; I shall not fear :
What can flesh do unto me ?

This mysterious phrase in the first line is again repeated in the 10th and 11th verses of the same Psalm: "In the Elohim, or in the Godhead, do I boast of the דָּבָר (Davor), Word." Now, we have no hesitation in

maintaining, that David here refers to nothing else than to his Antitype, to his Son according to the flesh, to the blessed Word, the Second Person in the Godhead, Him who was in the beginning, and by whom the heavens were made. In this overwhelming calamity, when nothing but death was to be expected from his enemies, the Spirit was pleased to allow the sufferer a glimpse into futurity, to show him in himself not only the destined king of Israel, but also the progenitor of the Word, the Saviour of the world. This revelation put his present deliverance beyond a doubt, set him above the fear of man, and gave him a cause of rejoicing which no prison and no dread of death could allay.

The phrase is a very remarkable one, and appears nowhere in Scripture but in this Psalm. It is thought by critics to refer either to the general promises of God to his suffering children, or to some special promise made to David by Samuel, that he should come safely through all dangers, and at last be king, or to some still more special communication of the Spirit regarding his deliverance.* But we ask any scholar if these loose interpretations fit down rightly on the words of this Oracle? Were we to understand under *Davor* not *Word*, but *promise*, David would have said דְּבַר אֱלֹהִים אֶהְלֵל (Devar Elohim Ahalel, or Ahalel Devar Elohim), "I will praise the word (promise) of God." Now, what can it mean to praise a word or promise, when it is God, the giver of the promise, who is to be praised? But to express it better David could have said, had such been his meaning, אֶהְלֵל אֱלֹהִים עַל דְּבָרוֹ (Ahalel Elohim al De-varo), "I praise God for his promise." But in the significance of an expression so peculiar in itself, and twice so emphatically repeated, there must be something higher than such criticism will reach: Be Elohim Ahalel Davor; Be Jehovah Ahalel Davor. According to the structure, we cannot mistake but that the *Word* is the object in which David boasts or glories, and that this *Word* is *in* the Elohim. We now ask any Christian what we are to understand of this Oracle of God. Are we to strip it of its splendour with such critics, or are we to take the words in their simplest and yet largest meaning, and agree, that David was here favoured with a revelation of Christ? Jesus himself will answer and say, that the Psalms spake of him; that David, his type, by the Holy Spirit, spake of him? John the inspired apostle tells us that Jesus was the Word, who was in the beginning with God, who came to be the light of the world, and the boast and glory of the believers of all time. Now if David speaks by the same Spirit, what are we to understand but that he speaks of the same Word? He saw, in visions, that this Word was to become flesh, and to stand on the earth after many days, and that he himself was to be progeni-

* We here present the reader with the opinions of two modern critics, each famous in his respective country. It is no matter of surprise that they should have rejected the reading of the common versions of their countries, the readings being much alike. Horsley has rendered it thus, "God shall be the theme of my praise; he hath passed his word," which is far too paraphractical for a man who undertakes to be a translator. The following is the translation of Hengstenberg, "God, boast I, his word," and in verse 10, "God, I praise, a word," "The Lord I praise, a word." The latter has disposed of the α in such a way as to leave it unexpressed, and, as his sentences stand, he has committed himself neither to one meaning nor another, for they serve none, and one must think long, and suggest much, on and for the mystery into which he plunges the two sublime sentences, before the judgment "it is absurd" can be pronounced.

tor of that Word, and that as his type he was destined to much affliction, in order to leave to the Church such predictions of *his* sufferings as these.

5. All day long they are busy wresting my words :
All their thoughts concerning me are for evil.

In Psalms of the present plaintive character there is a remarkable fluctuation of feeling. The Psalmist is at one moment high in hope and confidence, and the next instant he is again plunged into a depth of lamentation. In the preceding verse he asks triumphantly, "What can flesh do unto me?" and in the present he has a complaint of the mischievous words and thoughts of his enemies. This description of their wresting of his words, and their evil interpretations of his conduct, is a close account of how Christ was treated by the Scribes and Pharisees. In the case of David this may refer rather to Saul and his creatures than to the Philistines, although among the latter there were doubtless many who would compass the death of such an enemy, even by false accusations.

6. Let them fear; let those who mark my steps hide themselves :
Even as they did when waiting for my soul.
7. Because of their iniquity carry them off :
In indignation cast down such people, O God.

"Carry them off," *i.e.*, to destruction. That the word פָּלַט (Palet) signifies to carry off to destruction, see Isa. v. 29. David, as the type of his suffering Son, seems to have had a clear knowledge at that time that all his own afflictions were appointed for a purpose, to fit him for representing in his own age the Man of Sorrows, but that the time would come when all his persecutions should cease, and when he would be in safety from the malice of his enemies; therefore he proceeds saying :—

8. When thou hast once summed up my wanderings;
Putting my tears into thy bottle :
Yea, even recording them in thy book.
9. Then must mine enemies turn to flight as soon as I cry :
This I certainly know, for God is on my side.

The word שִׁמַּח (Simah) in verse 8 stands as a participle, not in the imperative, and falls upon both nouns, as if he had said הֲלֹא שִׁמַּח בְּסִפְרֹתָי. As the verb שִׁים (Sim) signifies the arrangement of a thing, so it means as well "recording in the book" as "putting into the bottle." The word הֲלֹא (Haloh), which is invariably rendered "is it not?" or "is not this?" should oftener be rendered as above, "Yea, even," or "behold," "take notice," "to see," which are more frequently its meanings; even although a compound of הָ and לֹא. See verse 13th.

The imagery in verse 8th, although not in harmony with the style of western poetry, is yet touching and full of interest. The Father of Provi-

dence is spoken of as having a certain purpose to fulfil with his children ; appointing them a certain number of changes to wander through, allotting them a certain number of tears to shed, and when the numbers are run out, and the Divine purpose is accomplished, then their enemies are put to flight, and they are led up to the rest and triumph of heaven. Only when this purpose is answered, will God grant their prayer for peace, and then, in the words of David, "as soon as I cry;" or, "in the day when I call."

10. In the Godhead do I boast of the Word ;
In Jehovah do I boast of the Word.
11. In the Godhead do I put my trust ; I shall not fear.
What can man do unto me ?

When Jacob, the pilgrim, was visited by Jehovah, who promised him his protection, and showed him the wonders of Providence in "the vision of the ladder," he vowed in his gratitude a solemn vow, which vow he was to pay unto the Lord when he returned to the house of his father. David, the prisoner, had received a more glorious, a more distinct revelation than the other, whether in a vision or in some other manifestation of the Spirit we cannot tell. But as his present deliverance seemed to be so closely interwoven with the revelation of the Word, he now follows the example of Jacob, and makes a vow to the God in whom he trusted.

12. I take upon me, O God, as a vow unto thee :
I will pay unto thee thank-offerings.

The Hebrew meaning of this clause is decidedly as we have rendered it. It is quite to the same effect as if it had been thus arranged, **עָלַי אֱלֹהִים** **נָתַתְּ לִי** (Alai Elohim Neder Lecha), "I take upon me (so the **עָלַי** (Alai) signifies at the beginning of a clause in vowing), O God, to vow, or to pay a vow unto thee;" and afterwards he states in what it should consist, i.e. in thank-offerings. In Ps. lxvi., and cxvi., we see how faithfully he paid all his vows as soon as he was delivered.

13. When thou hast delivered my soul from death,
Yea, even my feet from falling,
That I should walk before God in the light of the living.

That the particle **כִּי** also signifies "when," see Exod. iii. 21 ; Judges xvi. 16 ; 1 Sam. xiv. 29 ; Job i. 5, "When the days," and in many other places, the meaning and beauty of which have been injured, because the various force of this particle has not been properly brought out. David here in his vow, as Jacob before him, makes the sacrifices payable *when* the promised deliverance shall have been effected. How much is the passage confused when rendered, as in the common version, in the past tense, while as yet he was in prison.

Being now able to speak of the revelation made to David as intimated in this Psalm, we return to the consideration of these words of the title, *Jonath Elem Rechokim*. We have already observed that *Jonath Elem* mean "the mute dove;" but to see who is represented by this name, and

what is the import of *Rechokim*, we must turn to the examination of a passage in 2 Sam. chap. vii. There we are told that David proposed to Nathan to build a temple to the sacred ark of the covenant, but that the Lord instructed him by the prophet that such a work was reserved for Solomon his son, but at the same time, for his consolation, there were some glorious promises made to himself. In verse 16th, we read, "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee, and thy throne shall be erected for ever." In verse 18, "And King David went in and sat down before the Lord (before the veil of the Most Holy place), and David said, Who am I, O Jehovah, my Lord, and who is my father's house that thou hast brought me hitherto?" Verse 19th, when literally translated, reads thus, "And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God, (the establishment of his throne, the assurance that Solomon should build the Temple); but thou also hast made promises for the house of thy servant לְמֶרַחֶק (Le Merachok) for distant ages," or for a long time to come. וְזוֹת

תּוֹרַת הָאָדָם (Vezoth Torath Ha-Adam), and this is the instruction of Adam, Jehovah my Lord;" or, "And this is the promise of which Adam was instructed O Jehovah, my Lord." Now, when the Lord said unto David, "Thy throne shall be established for ever," his servant was in no danger of misunderstanding him, but must have seen at the moment that the reference was to his great Antitype, in whom alone it could be said that his throne was to be established for ever. It was in Shiloh alone, in Immanuel, who was for ever "to inherit the throne of his father David," that this promise was to receive its fulfilment. David therefore acknowledges that all these temporal blessings, however high, are as nothing when compared with the glorious promise of the Prince of Peace, which was to come into fulfilment (Le Merachok) "in the distant ages;" the promise being the same with the (Torath Ha-Adam) "the instruction" given to Adam on leaving Paradise, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent." This seed, this Messiah, the conqueror of Satan and sin, was to be the everlasting possessor of his throne.

We have seen how David, in the prison of Gath, was convinced of his deliverance by the revelation of the Word, in whom he at once began to boast and glory. This revelation, although perhaps only a glimpse at first, lodged in his soul, more and more gathering light to itself by successive contemplations, and by successive influxes of the Spirit. Lifting his eye to the *fulness of times*, he beheld the Word made flesh and dwelling among men, suffering for the sins of the world, and brought as a lamb to the slaughter, yet opening not his mouth to complain. The lamb may we'll be an emblem of the meekness of Christ, but an emblem still more poetical and expressive is the dove, in all ages the personification of peace. And when was this heavenly Dove to be seen among men, but in the *fulness of times*, and speaking from the position of David, "in the distant ages?" The above promise was to have its fulfilment (Le Merachok) "in the distant ages," and what more natural in David, when, after long years of experience, he affixed an emblematical title to this Psalm, than to say that it speaks of the *Jonath Elem Rechokim*, "The Mute Dove of the distant ages?" *Rechokim* being the same word and having the same meaning as *Le Merachok*, in the above passage of Samuel. The whole title of the

Psalm will, according to this view, have the following import, "To the Chief Cause of all Causes. Concerning the Mute Dove of distant ages. A composition of David committed to memory, when the Philistines took him or imprisoned him in Gath."^{*}

INTRODUCTION TO PS. XXII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XIII.

Having seen in the foregoing Psalm the revelation made to David regarding the *mute dove of the distant ages*, the suffering Lamb of God, who, though reviled, cursed not—though scourged and crucified, opened not his mouth—"as a Lamb brought to the slaughter, he was dumb and opened not his mouth,"—and having seen what a fountain of healing balm this revelation proved to the suffering and afflicted David in the lamentable condition into which he was brought, being in prison in the hands of his fierce enemies the Philistines—we now come to another Psalm, which must have been composed at the same time, and a Psalm of which no Christian can think without peculiar interest. We refer to Psalm xxii., in which the sufferings of the Messiah are represented in such a harrowing manner; his bitter complaints on Golgotha's cross in such soul-affecting language; the malice, cruelty, and blasphemous behaviour of his fierce enemies in such a terrific picture; his prayer for deliverance, and his supplication for speedy assistance and help in such humble and calm pleas; his pure confidence in Jehovah's faithfulness in such omnipotence of argument; the glorious and blessed results of his death and resurrection in such emphatic and expressive strains of revelation,—that it requires a most gigantic infidelity to deny that the Holy Ghost speaks through the whole Psalm, or that it is the language of the bleeding Nazarene on Golgotha's accursed tree. The Psalm cannot refer to a mere man even in the most extreme sufferings which cruelty is able to inflict upon a mortal body, because the sufferer here referred to is represented as already pierced, and broken, and crushed—his strength poured out like water, and his life melted like wax in the midst of his bowels. He is fainting, he is dying, and still confident in his deliverance. He is decidedly forsaken of God; he is deprived of the protection of heaven, and delivered up into the hands of the destroyers, who have pierced and murdered him. His God has forgotten him, and does not regard his supplications, though he cries day and night; and yet he will declare Jehovah's glory, and the praise of his name among his brethren, because Jehovah has not despised his cries nor hid his face from him, but heard and answered him when he called upon his name. Who then but the actually slain and risen Lamb of God can be the real sufferer of the Psalm? Who but the forsaken of God for the period of death, and the raised up Son of God to glory and honour on his Father's throne, could constitute by his sufferings, death, and resurrection, the subject of the conversion of the whole world unto God, as indicated in the latter part of this melancholy, but, at the same time, joyous and soul-cheering ode? Do

* Let it always be born in mind, that even if this prediction of the Spirit might have been in some measure dark to David at first, still, as the mystery of the Messiah, the everlasting covenant, and David's relation to the kingdom of his Son, were gradually made clear to him, these Oracles which first appeared obscure even unto himself, were, in his latter day, bright and clear as the sun. It doth not necessarily follow that a title must have been put at the head of its Psalm at the time of composition. The Psalmist might often have poured forth oracles which were mysterious to him, but when, by subsequent revelation, light was thrown upon the subject, an allegorical title might be prefixed to designate what mysterious revelations the Psalm contains.

we pass from internal evidence to establish this argument from other passages of Scripture? Then the first subject that presents itself to our view is the 53d chapter of Isaiah. There, as here, we see a suffering, despised, persecuted, wounded, pierced, bleeding, fainting, and dying Lamb; there, as here, we see Jehovah's wrath poured in huge streams upon its head, and the two-edged sword of his judgment piercing and tormenting its very heart and soul; there, as here, we discover joy from mourning, triumph from agony, life from death, healing balm from gushing blood, and a multitude of saved and rescued sinners—a righteous army, praising a mighty God, as the glorious results of all the harassing and heart-rending scenes of the most terrible anguish and agony of one soul. Do we advance in the course of our inquiry a little farther? Then our footsteps lead us without the gates of Jerusalem. Here we discover a boisterous multitude with armed soldiers, leading the meek and humble prophet of Nazareth between glittering swords and spears, with a crown of thorns on his head, to the place of murder. Do we inquire concerning the nature of his crime? None among the thousands can tell it; and yet when we come to Pilate's house, or to the place of skulls, called Golgotha, all, as with one voice, exclaim—"Crucify, crucify him, for it is not fit that such a one should live." A few moments longer, and we see the meekest of men nailed to a wooden cross; the holiest of bodies bruised and pierced; the purest of beings mocked and reviled as the worst of evil doers. He that took not anything from man is stripped naked of all his clothing, on which the Roman soldiers cast lots, as if it were their own property, purchased with a price. But let us hear what the sufferer says! Ah, he exclaims, "Eli, Eli, Lama Shevaktani"—the very language of the Psalm. Here is evidence, and what need we more.

[We are not in the least surprised, at the fruitless struggle and vain labours of commentators belonging to that nation, whose fathers were the blind instruments of inflicting the cruel tortures and death on the body of the Saviour, foretold in this Psalm. Still abiding in darkness, without Christ, and without the light he brought into the world—as, alas! that nation does—still denying that He was the Lamb of God that was to bear the sins of the world, as foretold in this Psalm, in the 53d chapter of Isaiah, and in many other passages of Old Testament Scripture, we need not wonder that they endeavour to darken, distort, and violate the sense of the passages to which we have referred, and among them the 22d Psalm, in attempting to find out phantom sufferers, false representatives, in order to make them the subjects spoken of by the inspired writers. In this labour of darkness they try to represent Hezekiah, Jeremiah, Josiah, or even the Jewish nation at large, as the suffering individuals or subjects spoken of in this Psalm, in Isaiah liii., and in other places; their chief motive being, an unwillingness to acknowledge the crime committed by their fathers, or to confess that the blood of Messiah lies upon them. But even among the writers of that nation there are many, especially among the Cabalists, who confess that these passages speak of the sufferings of the Messiah who is still to come; and as their blindness and carnal mindedness do not allow them to think that the great Messiah, often spoken of in Scripture, as a glorious and exalted personage, should at the same time be exposed to great sufferings, they therefore divide their Messiah in twain, and make the one—the suffering Messiah—to be a descendant of Joseph's tribe, and the other—the glorious Messiah—to be BEN DAVID, the Son of David.

But we are surprised indeed to see Christian writers who profess to believe that Christ has come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth,—that Christ himself has said—"the Psalms speak of me"—that all the sufferings spoken of in this Psalm were literally inflicted on the body of the Messiah—that Christ himself, when agonizing on the cross, exclaimed in the very language of this Psalm, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" that his enemies mocked his confidence in God in the very words described in this Psalm—that the garments of Jesus were divided among the soldiers, and that, as literally foretold here, they cast lots on his vesture—that the death and resurrection of Jesus have procured the conversion of an innumerable multitude of all heathen nations to God, and as here foretold, will still be the means of converting all "the ends of the earth"—to believe those things, and that the holy Scriptures which declare them were inspired of God—and yet to find these very Christians groping in thick darkness as to their meaning and application, worse far than even the blinded Jew; nay more, to find them shuffling with all their might in the store of their ignorant delusions, and attempting under a vain imagination to introduce as the sufferer in this Psalm some other person, only to banish Christ out of it,—is indeed matter of deep surprise and regret. Come, Christian reader, and let us hear the opinion of a great German theologian, Hengstenberg, a name famous in this country, and whose book on the Psalms has met with a wide circulation in orthodox Scotland; let us see if he finds Christ here, as the sufferer spoken of in this Psalm. In his preface to the 22d Psalm he says:—"The view which has hitherto obtained throughout the Christian church is, that which interprets the Psalm directly and exclusively to Christ. The author by no means regrets that he adopted this view in his Christology. It was the easiest and most natural of those which were then before the world; and he would not now hesitate for one moment to adopt it, were he making a choice among these, as he then did—imperfectly acquainted as he then was from personal investigation with the spirit of the Old Testament." This is a very unsatisfactory statement. It is too apparent to stand in need of any explanation, not merely from this statement, but also from other parts of his writings, that the author has but a very imperfect acquaintance with either the spirit or the beauty of the poetry of the Old Testament. This the reader may see from his translation of the first two verses of the 56th Psalm, as we have quoted it in the preceding Psalm in this book, and as we shall show occasionally as we pass along. Moreover, we are fully satisfied that a perfect acquaintance with the spirit of the Old Testament would not induce him to deny what Christ and his church, and his apostles and prophets, have confirmed. Hengstenberg should have said that when he adopted that Christian view, he was but imperfectly acquainted with German rationalism, with the spirit of infidelity and delusion. Such would have been a fair statement. He then refers to the opinion of Calvin, Melancthon, Amyrald, &c., who maintain that "David, while supplicating God in relation to a particular case of distress, transfers, elevated in prophetic Messianic vision, his own concerns to the extreme sufferings of the promised Messiah, and speaks as the present type of the coming deliverer." To this view he replies in the following words: "Although the author recognises a great deal of truth in this view, yet he cannot but consider it as an unsuccessful attempt. Such an exposition of the Psalm, the author cannot but regard as perfectly inconceivable. How David could extend his own consciousness to that of his offspring cannot be conceived

without confusion of the life of souls, and destruction of personal identity. . . . Meantime the direct and exclusive reference of the Psalm to Christ presents such difficulties that one cannot feel at perfect liberty in adopting it, but feels rather inclined to look round for some other interpretation which may satisfy the mind. (Hengstenberg must mean here to 'satisfy' the German rationalistic intoxicated 'mind.') We cannot, without violence, suppose the Messiah to be introduced speaking, without one single expression specializing his person." Here, Christian reader, you have a fearful specimen of monstrous and flagrant subversion of revealed truth on the part of this celebrated writer. Notwithstanding of all internal evidence of the literal fulfilment of the Psalm in the person of Him whom he confesses to be his Saviour and the Messiah of the world, and of the fact, that the crucified Lamb of God showed that he was the person of whom the Psalm speaks, by addressing Jehovah, in the last moments of his agonies, in the very words of it, the writer, intoxicated with his own dreamings, is not afraid nor ashamed to exclude both David and Jesus from the Psalm, and to maintain that it refers to neither of them. He then goes on in his delusion to fabricate a dumb statue—a monstrous image of his own imagination, which he calls "an ideal man," and this lifeless, senseless thing, he introduces as the subject of this divine oracle, being at the same time so blind as not to see that all the objections which he arrays against the Christian opinion fall back with far greater force upon his own head. O poor Scotland! where wilt thou land if such poison is imported from wise Germany? What will become of thy orthodox and spiritually-minded theologians, when once they have swallowed the bitter dose of such a destructive powder?

The very painful impression which this part of Mr Hengstenberg's work on the Psalms produced on our mind when we read it, led us to examine somewhat minutely his opinions on other portions of the Psalms, whether Messianic, or such as refer to a future state, to the immortality of the soul, or to eternity: And we are deeply grieved to say, that in almost all these places we found that he exhibits most erroneous and rationalistic views, and appears, alas! as if determined to banish every idea of Jesus, immortality, and eternity, from the Psalms altogether. We therefore deem it our solemn duty thus to expose this book before the public, and to warn our beloved Christian friends in this country, and Christians in general, against the insidious and deadly infidel poison which it contains; and our warning is the more earnest, inasmuch as its noxious sentiments are masked in fair and Christian language, which renders them the more dangerous. Our witness is in heaven, that in so doing our single undivided object is to preserve souls from going astray, and that we are actuated therein by the purest Christian love. In the progress of this work, we shall have to make occasional quotations from this author, and wherever the truth is withheld, or denied, or perverted, we shall humbly endeavour to hold it forth and vindicate it to the best of our ability. He who hath ears to hear, let him hear.]

The more closely we look into the history of the Psalmist, and consider the different and mysterious caverns of misery he had to enter, the fountains of affliction and agony he had to bathe in, and the fiery furnace of persecution that was heated sevenfold, and into which he was, as it were, violently cast by the arm of Omnipotence, the more clearly will we see how

all this was intended to enable him to speak the language of his suffering Son and Antitype. When by the invisible arm of Providence he was plunged into a deep sea of misery and distress, we soon discover him at the same time enveloped as it were by the Spirit of prophecy; and though with his own senses he felt his own woes and bewailed his own misery, yet the Spirit within him elevated the style of his language and made him pour forth his complaints in strains only applicable to the extreme sufferings of the Messiah his Son, whose agonies and pangs of death no suffering being among men could, at the time of composition, either experience or describe. It follows, therefore, that in considering the 22d Psalm in connection with the history of David, we must look for a period in his situation and sufferings which at least bear some similarity to those, to which by anticipation the Spirit within him has applied his experience and his feelings. But no period of David's history was so fit in which to compose a Psalm like the 22d, as when he was shut up in the prison of Gath. Here alone he found himself quite destitute of any human assistance, and entirely in the hands of the destroyers. Brief as is the account in the book of Samuel of his sufferings, when he was in the hand of the Philistines, we may gather, from the title of the preceding Psalm, that they kept him in prison; and, need we add, that, when that cruel nation discovered who he was—that it was he who was the destroyer of their armies, and who slew Goliath their champion, they must surely have laid his feet in strong iron chains, and inflicted on him the severest cruelties. To what other time than that could David refer in the following passages? “The sorrows [or the strings] of death encompassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid,” Ps. xviii. 4. “When the wicked . . . came upon me to eat up my flesh,” Ps. xxvii. 2. When delivered from that calamity, he says in Ps. xxxiv. 6, “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles” [or miseries]. “He also brought me up out of an horrible pit,” Ps. xl. 2. And when, if not at the time referred to, could it be said that he was in an horrible pit? “The sorrows [or strings] of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me, I found trouble and sorrow. O Lord, truly I am thy servant . . . the son of thine handmaid, thou hast loosed my bonds,” Ps. cxvi. 3, 16. And when was he in bonds if not in Philistia? “The hands of the wicked have robbed me” [or enclosed me], Ps. cxix. 61. All these passages must refer to the terrible sufferings to which he was subjected, when found in fetters by the Philistines and cast into an “horrible pit”—the subterranean dungeon of an eastern prison in those days.

In the foregoing Psalm we have seen how the merciful God refreshed the wearied, exhausted, and fainting sufferer for a while by the revelation imparted to him regarding the “mute dove of the distant ages”—the patient sufferer, Jesus, his Son and Antitype, to whom David dedicated that Psalm. So in this Psalm, after the first dedicatory title לַמְנַצֵּחַ (Lamnatzeach), “To the Chief Cause of all Events,” David tells us that the Psalm speaks regarding the אֵילַת הַשָּׁחַר (Ayeleth Hashachar), the “Interposition of the Morning Star”—that is to say, the Psalm contains a description of the

* The word אֵילַת (ayeleth) is taken from the root אָיַל (Eyol), which means “interposing aid,” assistance, or help. So in Psalm lxxviii. 4, “I am as a man that has no strength”—no

Interposition of the Morning Star—the Messiah in other words, the light of the morning to those who sat for thousands of years in darkness. It is an account of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of the “bright and Morning Star” of revelation—the “Root and Offspring of David” (Rev. xxii. 16), who was to interpose between God and man.

In the dark dungeon of Philistia, bound in fetters of iron, the suffering son of Jesse must have lain fasting for several days and nights. Helpless, defenceless, and lonely, there was only one invisible Being into whose divine bosom the agonised sufferer poured his complaints from time to time. Having waited for relief several days and nights, and received none, and just when his agonies and the anguish of his soul had reached the utmost extremity, the Holy Ghost took possession of the type, and made him burst forth in the language of the blessed Antitype.

1. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?*
 Why art thou so far from my deliverance ?
 Why so far from the words of my roaring ?
2. O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou answerest not ;
 And now it is night, and yet there is no relief to me !

The first thing that is remarkable here is the strong interrogative language in verse first, “My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” In the ordinary way, no son of Adam has any claim to put such a question to the Most High, for there is always reason why God might forsake us for ever in his righteousness. But we have seen in the preceding Psalm, what a strong assurance and hope of deliverance David received, along with the revelation made to him. On this account—as the father of the promised Messiah—as the possessor of such blessed promises, he could with perfect consistency speak to Jehovah in the language of Jesus, his promised descendant. When the first ray of gladness that beamed upon his wounded soul had passed away, and he was still left—even though he prayed day and night continually—in his miserable and desperate condition, dark clouds of anguish and grief again gathered about his mind, so that he begins to pour

interposing assistance to help me. The word שָׁחַר (Shachar) means “Morning Star” wherever it occurs, and is the same with the Greek *αστρα του πρωιου*, which likewise signifies the “Morning Star.” That the word שָׁחַר (Shachar) is quite different from בֹּקֶר (Bocker), which means “Morning,” we may see from Job xxxviii. 12, “Hast thou commanded the בֹּקֶר (Bocker).” “Morning, since thy days.” Hast thou made שָׁחַר (Shachar). “the Morning Star,” to know his place? The same it signifies, Gen. xix. 15, “And when the Morning Star arose;” and Gen. xxxii. 26, “Let me go כי־עלה השחר (Ki alah Hashachar), for the Morning Star arose.” In the same manner it should be rendered in the numerous places where it occurs, for the word *Shachar* means nothing else than “Morning Star.” What became of the translators or lexicographers that they either would not or could not render it rightly we cannot tell. One thing I know, that we Hebrews have a name for the Morning Star, and that is *Shachar*. What astronomers have to say about the existence of a particular Morning Star, we have nothing to do with.

* The first question לָמָּה (Lama), “Why,” refers evidently to both succeeding clauses; and as it passes along it takes the רָחוֹק (Rachok), “far,” from the second clause to the third along with it. The shortening of the clauses indicates the agony and fainting condition in which the whole is uttered—“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Ah! far from my deliverance. Ah! the words of my roaring.”

forth the most bitter lamentations. In verses 3, 4, and 5, he reminds God of his holiness, loving-kindness, and faithfulness to his people in the days of old, and then he gives utterance to his bitter complaints.

3. Yet, art thou not the Holy One residing amidst the glory of Israel?

The phrase יושב תהלות (Yoshev Tehiloth), "residing amidst the glory," is the same as יושב הכרובים (Yoshev Hachruvim), Ps. lxxx. 1, "residing between the cherubim," which refers to the Shechinah, and constituted the glory and splendour of Israel.

4. Our fathers trusted in thee; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.
 5. Unto thee they cried, and were rescued,
 In thee they have put their trust; and were not put to shame.
 6. Am I alone a worm, and not a man?
 Am I a disgrace to humanity, and a scandal to the nation?*

The sufferer having exclaimed in the first verse, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" gives in the second verse the reason why he was led to think that he was forsaken of God, namely, because he cries day and night, and yet receives no answer nor aid. He then shows in the three following verses that he is astonished at this; and all the more, because he has to do with the same God whom his fathers often trusted, and found that he was good, merciful, and gracious, and a ready deliverer in time of distress; for when they cried unto Him in their distress, he instantly rescued them. Seeing, therefore, that Jehovah was such a merciful God in all ages, and yet to all appearance does not prove himself so to the present agonized and supplicating soul, he therefore turns to his first question, and asks again, "My God, my God, why hast thou (thou ever merciful Jehovah) forsaken me?" Me alone, and why? Am I alone a worm, and not a man? Have I not the same covenant right as my fathers had? Am I not also a child of Abraham, thy friend and covenanted servant? Do I not acknowledge thee always as *my* God? Or am I so wicked, so sinful, as to be a reproach to humanity, and therefore to be crushed, like a worm,

* The pronoun אנכי (Veanochi) is emphatic. "Am I alone a worm, and not a man?" The conjunctive shews that it stands in close connection with what is said before it, *i. e.* "Art thou not the same God who didst rescue my fathers, when they called upon thee? and why then hast thou forsaken me? Am I alone a worm and not a man? Am I alone a disgrace to that nation to whom thou hast proved thyself a ready help in time of trouble? Am I alone a scandal to humanity, and therefore to be removed? When the Messiah is styled, Isa. xlix. 7, בֶּזְזוּת נַפְשׁוֹ (Beso Nephesh), the "despised soul," or "despised individual," the Messiah does not call himself so, but wicked men who despised him unjustly. So in Isa. liii. 3, he was despised by the ungodly. But why call himself so when speaking to God, who knows him better than to be a scandal to the nation? See exposition.

without mercy? Am I a scandal to the Jewish nation, and therefore to be removed out of the way in the bloom of my years?"* The sufferer then proceeds to complain of his miserable condition, and all along we find him claiming his rights.

7. All they who see me laugh me to scorn,
They break forth with their lips†—waving their heads—
8. He relied on Jehovah, let him deliver him—
Let him save him, if it be that he delighteth in him.

The manner in which the claims, supplications, complaints, and explanations of the sufferer are expressed in this part of the Psalm, is very touching. In verses 7 and 8, he describes the conduct of the wicked who were his enemies, and how they scorned his confidence in God. In the following verses, he explains the reason why he has at least claims with all the members of his nation who obtained deliverance, and why they are led to regard him as one who relied entirely upon God.

9. For thou art he who delivered me out of the womb,‡
Who made me lie in safety upon my mother's breasts.||
10. Upon thee have I been cast from my birth;
From my mother's womb, thou art my God.

The primary meaning of the argument is this—I was born of Israelitish parents; and hence within the bond of the covenant. From my earliest days I was taught to regard thee as my Creator, Preserver, and my covenant God. I have therefore a right to call thee "my God," and to invoke thy aid and thy help in time of trouble, as all thy children, my fathers of

* This was the way in which I have always understood this passage, even before knowing that it refers to a greater than David; and now I cannot see any reason for attempting to destroy the sublime connection, and follow the common rendering of verse 6th. Besides, I cannot see how the person (be it David or Christ, or both) who so boldly called upon God in the first verse—"Why hast thou forsaken me?" should now style himself in the affirmative "a worm, and not a man"—a disgrace to humanity—a scandal to the nation. Nor will I, nor can I be satisfied with any explanation given by commentators to establish that weak opinion, and so destroy the sublime harmony of the whole Psalm.

† The word פִּתְּחָם (Peter), when a noun, means an "opening" in any thing; when a verb, it signifies "to open," or "to make an opening," as to open the sluice and let the water gush forth. See Prov. xvii. 14. So here it means literally, they make an opening in their lips, in order to cause their reproach to gush forth—"he relied, or more literally, he rolled his affairs upon Jehovah's care, let him deliver him," &c.

‡ The root נָחַם (Gach) denotes either to make a thing break forth smoothly, or to sup it in in like manner. See Job xxxviii. 8; Mic. iv. 10; Job xl. 23. The act denoted by it in the text is ascribed to Jehovah, as one of the most marvellous things in nature.

|| The primary meaning of בֵּטַח (Betach) is "secure," or security." When a man stands within a strong fortification, or upon a rock, he is בֵּטַח (Betach) secure. In rendering the word, as I have often done, by the term "trusting," as expressive of putting his trust in God, it was to accommodate the reader by using the word to which he is so much accustomed, and is even comprehensive enough. But still the more literal rendering of the word, when used in relation to God, would be, in God I put my security or my safety. In this verse it means, Who made me lie in safety upon my mother's breasts.

old, whom thou didst deliver when they called upon thee. And in as much as my wicked enemies know how I have acknowledged thee as my God, my confidence, and my shield, all the days of my life, therefore they now take occasion to mock me, and blasphemously to say, "Behold, he always boasted of his confidence in God, let him now deliver him, if it be so that he delighteth in him." But how much more glorious are these words, when put into the mouth of the suffering Antitype, whose incarnation and birth have been the greatest wonder and most overwhelming mystery in creation. His preservation by the hand of God, when Herod sought his life, and when as yet he was on the breasts of his mother—his zeal for God and for the glory of his sanctuary all the days of his life on earth,—his frequent announcements that he was sent of the Father, and that Jehovah, by whose power he wrought wonders, and raised the dead from their sepulchres, was his God,—all these things furnished the suffering Messiah with arguments on every side, and gave occasion for his claims upon Jehovah's aid and deliverance, as well as for his wicked enemies' saying, "He relied on God. Let him deliver him," if it be so as he said, that the Father in heaven loveth the Son—that "Jehovah delighteth in him." The sufferer then cries again for speedy help, and enumerates his terrible sufferings.

11. Continue not to stand at a distance from me—
When distress is so near—when there is no other succourer.
12. Many bulls have compassed me about,
The mighty beasts of Bashan have encircled me.
13. They gape on me with their mouths like a ravening and roaring lion.
14. Like water I am poured abroad, and all my bones are starting asunder :
My heart within me is become like melted wax.
15. My strength is dried up like a potsherd ;
My tongue also cleaveth to my jaws :
Surely thou ordainest me to the dust of death !*

Here the complaints of the sufferer have reached the extreme point. His

* The word שִׁפְּתָי (Shupthath) signifies "to put or get in order" anything, also "to dispose, to arrange;" hence שִׁפְּתוֹ הַקֵּרֶר (Shephoth basir), 2 Kings iv. 38. "Set on the great pot," literally it should be rendered, "Set the pot or the kettle in order," i.e. to the fire. The same it should be rendered, Ezekiel xxiv. 3, "Set the pot or kettle in order, get it in order (on the fire ranges for boiling), and also pour water into it." The word is rightly rendered in Isa. xxi. 12, "Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us;" but more literally it should be, "O Lord, do thou ordain peace for us," &c. In our passage it appears as a compound of verb and pronoun in the second person singular, present tense, תִּשְׁפֹּתֵנִי (Tishpetheni), "thou ordainest me," i.e. to the dust of death—thou hast decreed that I should go down to the grave, and be laid in the dust as all dead are laid. The ך affixed to שִׁפְּתָי (Lanaphar) in the beginning of the clause in question, is not a *vav* conjunctive, but is put here to signify that the following statement, i.e. that God ordaineth him to the dust of death, was the conclusion of the preceding ones—that from the extremity to which the Lord allowed his agonies to reach, he was brought to conclude, "Surely, thou hast ordained me," &c.

fierce and deadly enemies have enclosed their victim, gaping at him and ready to devour and swallow him up, so that any hope of escape is altogether out of the question. The victim is at length attacked with vociferous fury—he is crushed and bruised, wounded and exhausted—his vigour is vanishing like out-poured water, and his members are disjointed—his heart melteth within him from fear and anguish—his strength fadeth away, and his tongue cleaveth to his jaws—he fainteth. He laid his sufferings before the only Being who could rescue him, but received no aid; and then he exclaims, “Now surely thou ordainest me to the dust of death. If thou hadst intended to deliver me, then thou hadst not allowed it to reach to this extremity—thou wouldst have helped me long before; my death, therefore, must be determined by thee, who dost ordain me to the dust.” But this is not all. The sufferer gives other reasons also to confirm his conclusion that such an agonizing and ignominious death was his appointed lot, according to heaven’s irresistible decree:

16. For dogs have compassed me about;
The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me;
They have pierced my hands and my feet.
17. I number all my bones; let them look, let them stare at me.
18. They part my garments amongst them,
And upon my robe they are casting lots.

Now, every attentive reader of this Psalm must perceive a distinct division of sentiment and subject in the transition from verse 15 to verse 16. That he had already reached the extreme point of suffering is evident from the preceding verses, in which the sufferer states that he is poured out like water, that his bones or members are disjointed, and that his heart is melted like wax within him; and hence he justly concludes in verse 15 that any hope of life is now out of the question—that death is unavoidable; nay, he is fully persuaded that heaven had appointed him to this lot. Whence is it, then, that the despairing and dying sufferer not only continues to pour forth his complaints, as in verses 16, 17, and 18; but that his hopes begin again to revive, and that he again prays for a speedy deliverance? Yea, whence is it that help came to him after all—that he was delivered, and resolves to praise Jehovah on account of it? It could not surely be the same person (if a common man were intended as the sufferer of the Psalm) whose heart melted within him, whose strength was completely dried up, who before had despaired of life, and as in verse 15, had fainted to death. Moreover, it is evident from verses 16, 17, and 18, that the person whose hands and feet were pierced, was persecuted even to death; for in such a case only was it customary that the executioners got the garments of the victim. How is it then that the sufferer still speaks, still prays, yea, and is delivered?*

* These considerations show us at once the folly of men (be they Jews or be they speculating German Christians) in attempting to apply this Psalm to a merely persecuted man, or to men suited to the devices of their own imaginations. The sufferer of the Psalm must have been put to death—he must have died in agonies. There is not to be found anywhere in Scripture a parallel to the terrific character of the sufferings here described, nor is it within the compass of poetical figures to describe it. Accordingly we must either find out the right

The truth is, that in this Psalm we must discover and acknowledge the presence of a type and antitype, as necessarily as we must admit that the sufferer was possessed of a body and a soul. David, as the type, stood exactly in the same relation to Messiah his antitype, as the body of a man stands to his soul. And just as the soul of a man may continue to speak, or be represented as speaking, even after the death of the body in which it tabernacled for a time ; so the antitype may be considered as speaking at a point which his type could neither reach, nor where he could speak of himself. This, indeed, is the mystery of the Psalm. David, the persecuted and suffering prophet, was instructed and inspired to describe the death of the Lamb of God, who was really, not figuratively, to suffer all these things, according to the everlasting plan of salvation ; but his body was no more to remain in death than the immortal soul of David his type. David, therefore, could go a certain length in describing Messiah's sufferings as if they were his own ; but there was a boundary beyond which, as regarded himself, he could not pass—he was not pierced at last—he was not put to death,—his soul had not to pray for the (immediate) resurrection of his body. This therefore was the work of the Spirit of prophecy ; for surely it needs no inspiration for a man to utter what he really feels, to mourn when he is wounded, and to describe his sufferings in the most harrowing manner. In this sense only can we understand how David, as an inspired type, could speak the language of a really crucified and dying Saviour ; and how the really dying sufferer on the cross could despair, and still pray for deliverance,—die, and still pray for life,—give up his soul, and still retain the firm conviction that Jehovah will raise him up again from the dead, and enable him thus to praise his name among his brethren.

In accordance with the views which we have now stated, we may examine the subject once more ; and in the light which the statements we have made are fitted to cast upon it, we shall see, that down to verse 15th, the bulls of Bashan are represented as crushing the body of the sufferer and putting it to death, and that, as it is declared in verse 15th, the result was the death of the victim. "Surely thou ordainest me to the dust of death." Once more, the sufferer, lifting up his eyes, looks round about him, and sees, that when the bulls succeeded so far as to pierce him and secure his death, then the dogs come and surround him (as it is usual for dogs to gather around a dead body), waiting for the moment he expires, that they may devour the body. He remembers, however, that with all their fierceness and fury they shall have no power to break his bones, for he was to rise again from the dead ; therefore, he says, "I number all my bones ; let them look, let them stare at me, they have no power to break my bones, though they had power to pierce and put to death my body." The Saviour said to his disciples, "the very hairs of your head are all numbered," that is,—ye are entirely under the guardian-care of your heavenly Father, and nothing can befall you without his permission ; so here he says, "I number all my bones," that is—I am confident in him, who is to raise me up again, that "he will keep all my bones, that not one of them be broken." Then beholding the last act of his murderers—how they divided his garments among them, and cast lots upon his robes,—the bleeding and dying Lamb offers up his last prayer :

meaning and application of it, or denounce the whole Psalm as the composition of a deranged man, whose exaggerations and inconsistencies will necessarily divest him of the authority of inspiration.

19. Now, O thou Jehovah, be not far off :
O my succourer, hasten to help me.
20. Deliver my soul from the sword ; my lonely one from the power
of the dog.
21. Save me from the lion's jaw ;
When thou hast answered me from the horns of the unicorns.
22. Then will I declare thy name unto my brethren ;
In the midst of the assembly will I praise thee.

The last words of the dying Saviour were,—“ Father, into thine hands I deliver my soul.” When the bleeding Lamb saw that all was fulfilled—that he had suffered all things, according as it was written of him, and was now ready to breathe his last, he recommended to his Father's care his body and soul, which were soon to be reunited. Meantime his body was exposed to equal danger with his soul. The dogs of verse 16th, who pierced his body, were not satisfied with merely inflicting the stroke of death—they still stared and looked at it ; so the Evangelists inform us, that the wicked enemies of the slain Lamb were not satisfied with the destruction of the living body, but would have even taken vengeance on the dead body of Jesus, especially from the fear of the rumoured resurrection among his disciples. But there was another enemy to be feared, who was still more dangerous, and who, if it had been in his power, would have cut with his sword the soul of the Messiah, as he did his body. This was the roaring lion, the devil. Jehovah's guardian care, therefore, was needed during the few days of the separation of the body and the soul. Accordingly, the dying Saviour on the cross, before dismissing his soul, invokes the speedy help of Jehovah his Father, and says, “ Deliver my soul from the sword”—let the piercing sword of Satan not have power over my soul. But he prays also for the preservation of the dead body, when left by the soul, and put in the lonely grave,—“ from the power of the dog, *my lonely one*,” i.e. the dead body in the dark and lonely grave, let it be preserved from being violated by the dog ;—who, no doubt, was afraid of the resurrection of Jesus, even more than his enemies, the Pharisees. This petition is repeated in the next verse, “ Save me from the lion's jaws, when thou hast answered me from the horns of the unicorns, i.e. when thou hast delivered my body safe (unbroken and undivided) from the cross, then save me from the lion's jaws ; preserve me from violence in the grave, until thou animatest my body again on the third day. The result would be, that when he should rise again from the dead, he would declare Jehovah's name among his brethren, and praise his wondrous work in the assembly.

In the remaining part of the Psalm the inspired type speaks of a triumphantly risen and glorious Saviour, and continues to describe the blessed consequences of the Saviour's death and resurrection, beginning with a solemn call upon all the faithful children of God to follow his example, and praise Jehovah for the mysterious plan of salvation by a slain and risen Saviour.

23. O ye that fear Jehovah, praise him ;
Glorify him, all ye seed of Jacob,
And tremble before him, all ye the seed of Israel :

24. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;
Neither hath he hid his face from him ;
But when he cried unto him, he heard.

Having summoned the children of God to praise and adore the merciful Jehovah for his wondrous dealings with the suffering but exalted and glorified Messiah, the Psalmist then declares in the following verse his own resolution to praise God for his goodness and mercy towards him, which were even to precede the deliverance of the Messiah his Antitype.

25. Of thee shall be my praise in the great congregation :
My vows will I perform before them that fear him.

In expounding this Psalm we must always bear in mind that David, as the type of the suffering Messiah, of whose salvation he speaks, was himself still exposed to the greatest danger of his life. At the same time he saw that the deliverance of his Antitype stood in close connection with his own, and that his deliverance therefore is all the more certain. In the preceding Psalm David had vowed a solemn vow unto the Lord ; here he renews it, by declaring that he will pay the same openly—that he will praise the Lord in the congregation before them that fear him. At such feasts of deliverance there were usually two kinds of sacrifices offered—whole burnt-offerings and thank-offerings. While the former were entirely consumed upon the altar, the latter were intended for the people, especially for the poor and needy to feast upon. Thus he says—

26. The meek shall eat and be satisfied :
They who seek Jehovah shall praise him :
Your heart shall be quickened for ever.

But the feast which David could prepare for the poor and needy after his deliverance, was nothing in comparison with the glorious feast which his Antitype was to prepare for the whole world. The Messiah's banquet after his resurrection was to be rich beyond comparison, and matchless in value. It would consist in the sure mercies of David—in the bread of heaven and of life—in the refreshing waters of salvation and joy, which he was to offer unto every sinner without money and without price. David therefore proceeds to explain what he meant by the feast that would be provided in his Son for the poor and needy—a feast more important than the temporal feast that he would provide ; for the feast of his Son would consist of the everlasting salvation of souls.

27. All the ends of the world shall remember this, and turn unto Jehovah :
All the families of the nations shall worship before thee.
28. For the kingdom is Jehovah's ; and he shall govern among the nations.

From these verses it is evident that, when David said in verse 25th,

"My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation," he refers to the triumphant Messiah, in whom, as we found in the foregoing Psalm, he had all his glorying. Moreover, in these verses the conversion of all nations is foretold: all the ends of the world shall remember, that is, they shall think of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Messiah, and thus return unto the Lord; for Jehovah's is the kingdom, and his triumphant Son must have the dominion of all nations unto the ends of the earth. The next verse contains a most sublime sentence (though, to our astonishment, universally misunderstood) about the mystery of Messiah's death, and the wonderful results of the conversion of a world of sinners.

29. All they that be fat upon earth shall wail and worship :*
Before him shall kneel down all those that descend to the dust ;
Because he hath not preserved in life his own soul.†

Wherever, in the Scriptures, the kingdom of heaven is spoken of, the poor and needy ones, the humble and lowly, are always the parties that are first satisfied and the first vessels of God's mercy. "When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." Isa. xli. 17. "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money (the poor and needy), come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." Isa. lv. 1. So in this Psalm the poor and needy are first called to Messiah's banquet in verse 26. "The meek [or needy] shall eat and be satisfied." This is not the case with the "fat of the earth"—with the rich and wealthy (under which figure the haughty and proud are always understood.) They are represented as not only the last in the kingdom of heaven, but as they neglect to seek it first, their portion is wailing and misery; for the Lord first reduces them to poverty and misery before they come to him. This was the case with the wealthy Jews—with the proud Pharisees; they would not come along with the poor and needy, therefore misery came upon them. And even when they shall come at last, as come they must, it shall be with wailing and mourning. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one that mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born. . . . And the land shall mourn, every family apart," &c. Zech. xii. 10—13. The Lord Jesus often spoke

* "Shall wail." The Hebrew word ^{אָכַל} (Ochlu), "shall eat," should read ^{אָבַל} (Ovlu). "shall wail or mourn." So I have seen it in our old MSS. The slight change of ב into ו, can easily be understood: it might have been caused from the ignorance of transcribers, who thought this to be the same word with ^{אָכַל} (yochlu) of verse 26; but if so, they failed to understand that, whilst a feast is prepared for the poor and needy ones, mourning and wailing must be the portion of the fat and proud of the earth. (See exposition.)

† If ever a sublime phrase was wilfully perverted by commentators and translators, then it must be this, for a child in the Hebrew language must see that ^{וְיָצַח לוֹ לְחַיָּה} (Venaphsho Lo Chiyah) refers to the slain Lamb spoken of in the Psalm, and denotes "because he [the Messiah] hath not preserved alive his own soul," but hath given it unto death, therefore shall all those that go down to the dust bow before him. See the meaning of ^{יָצַח} (Chiyah), Judg. xxi. 14. See exposition.

of the difficulty of the fat and the rich entering into the kingdom of heaven. So his apostles spoke regarding them: "Go to, now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that come upon you," &c. James v. 1. "Behold I he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and also they that pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Rev. i. 7.* So in this Psalm, when the Psalmist speaks of the conversion of the world at last, he says, "All the fat ones of the earth shall wail and worship," i.e. they shall wail because they have pierced him who died in agonies for them—because they have despised and neglected him so long after the poor and needy ones have served him faithfully and were satisfied—they shall worship him at last; they shall taste and see that he is good, and put their trust in him. David then speaks of the great mystery of the fact, that because the Lamb of God has poured out his soul in Death, therefore many souls shall be given unto him as his reward—because he suffered agonies on the cross, therefore the uttermost ends of the earth shall be his possession, every knee shall bow before the slain and risen Lamb; "Before him shall kneel down all those that descend into the dust [all mortals], because he hath not preserved alive his own soul." Is not this repeated in Isa. liii. 12, "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong (the meaning is, as a great one, as a mighty one), because he hath poured forth his soul into death," &c. Why translators have failed to understand the right meaning of this glorious prophecy of the Psalm, but have rather distorted its plain and simple meaning, we are unable to explain—we cannot understand. To render the phrase as it is in the common English version, "And none can keep alive his own soul," displays as much ignorance as it does carelessness; for there is no word in the original language corresponding to the word "none," nor is there any corresponding to the word "can." The words "naphsho lo chiyah" signify "his soul he has not preserved alive;" but the prefix "vav" signifies "because," so that the sense of the passage is—All mortals shall bow their knees before him, and worship him, because he has bought that right with his blood—because he preserved not alive his own soul, but gave it in death for the souls of men. Moreover, the verse quoted above from Isaiah liii., it is evident, has a close connection with this Psalm. This may be seen from the last two verses of the Psalm.

30. The seed that shall serve Him, shall be accounted unto Jehovah for a generation.
 31. They shall come and shall declare his righteousness unto the new born nations; when he hath performed it.

This conclusion of the Psalm stands in close connection to Isa. liii. 10, "When his soul shall make an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." What is the pleasure of the Lord, but the conversion of souls? The seed that shall serve the Messiah shall be accounted a generation unto Jehovah. These alone are his children; but the faithless and sinful, who will not

* We think that John here evidently alludes to the passage just quoted from Zechariah. The language in both places being nearly alike, we conclude that the reference in both is rather to a general conversion than to the last judgment.

serve him, belong to another father. Christ told his enemies whose children they were, "Ye are of your father, the devil;" but his few faithful disciples were the children of God, regenerated by his Spirit, written in his book of life, and counted unto him as his generation. It was that first-
seed of believers—the first followers of Jesus who went forth into the wide world and preached the righteousness of God unto new-born nations;—nations that were "born in a day" by the mighty work of the Spirit of God. They told the nation what Jesus had done for them; and when the nation heard it, they rejoiced, were converted and baptized, and became Jehovah's children and "joint-heirs" of Jesus Christ their Lord.

When Jonah the prophet had finished his humble prayer in the bowels of the whale, and when Jehovah had finished and accomplished his purposes with him, he commanded the whale, and it cast forth Jonah upon the dry land. So when Jehovah had finished his purpose with poor David, the suffering type, he invisibly and wonderfully commanded the king of Philistia to cast him out. David was driven away and was not put to death; he escaped with his life, and a new song of praise was put into his mouth,—a song full of beauty and poetical majesty. It is the following Psalm:—

PS. XXXIV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XIV.

"A COMPOSITION OF DAVID."

"When he disguised his sense (feigned himself mad) before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he escaped."

PART FIRST.

1. **℣** I will bless Jehovah at all times; his praise shall ever be in my mouth.
2. **℣** In Jehovah my soul shall boast: O let the meek hear it, and let them rejoice.
3. **℣** O magnify Jehovah with me; and let us extol his name together.
4. **℣** I sought Jehovah, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears.
5. **℣** They looked unto him and were brightened, and their countenances shall never blush.*
6. **℣** Behold, this poor man cried, and Jehovah heard, and saved him from all his afflictions.
7. **℣** The angel of Jehovah encampeth around those who fear him, and enervateth them.
8. **℣** O taste, and be convinced that Jehovah is good; happy is the man who taketh shelter in him.

* The reader will observe, that there is no verse in the original to answer to the letter **℣**, which lies in the nature of the argument, though the alphabetical order is injured by it, therefore the letter **℣** comes after **℣**.

9. י Fear Jehovah, O ye his saints; for there is no privation to those who fear him.
10. ש The lions do lack and starve; but they who seek Jehovah, shall want no good.

When Jehovah has granted a great deliverance to one of his children, all the members of the family, which is the church, must be filled with joy and gratitude; for they all depend upon the same Deliverer, they all drink of the same fountain. 1 Cor. xii. 26. It is therefore the holy duty of every child of God, when delivered from great distress, to make it known among the saints, that opportunity may be afforded to them to rejoice and thank God in praises and songs of joy. This David does in verse 2d: "O let the meek hear it and rejoice." יִשְׁמְעוּ עֲנָוִים (Yishmeu anavim) signifies the same here as in 1 Sam. xiii. 3, "And Saul blew the trumpet throughout the land, saying, יִשְׁמְעוּ הָעֶבְרִים (Yishmeu Haivrim), Let the Hebrews hear," i.e. and let them soon come to join me against the enemy. So here, when David says, "Let the meek hear it," he means, let them come and join me in praising God for the wonderful deliverance he has granted me. It is further understood, that these "meek" servants of God who delight in his praises, accept cheerfully the invitation of the delivered saint, and come together, standing, as it were, around David, and waiting to hear what he has to say. David then, in overwhelming joy, exclaims, "O magnify Jehovah with me; and let us extol his name together." And why? Because, "I sought Jehovah" (seeking Jehovah presupposes distress and need of his aid) "and he delivered me from all my fears." David then looks, as it were, around him, and in verse 5, tells the reason why he calls upon those "meek" brethren to join him in praising God, because they too have had the same experience of God's unspeakable mercy and loving-kindness, and shall enjoy the same all their days; "they [also] looked unto him [in distress] and were brightened"—and light appeared unto them in darkness, and help in time of trouble, and "their countenances shall never blush;" they shall never be ashamed of their faith in God, for he doth not change, but shall continue to be a PRESENT HELP to his children in every time of need. David again returns to his own deliverance, and says, "Behold, this poor man cried, and Jehovah heard, and saved him from all his afflictions." Behold here a vessel of mercy—behold here one who was in the very midst of destruction, but whom Jehovah heard graciously, and delivered out of the lion's jaws. The great agent in this wonderful deliverance is described in verse 7. "The angel of Jehovah," or "Jehovah the angel," מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה (Malach Jehovah) signifies everywhere the "Angel of the Covenant," the "Angel of Jehovah's presence," Isa. lxiii. 9; Exod. xxxiii. 14, "the angel in whom is Jehovah's name." Exod. xxxiii. 21. This angel is none other than Jesus Christ—the Angel of the Covenant, who encamped around his people in the pillar of cloud in the wilderness, and doth the same to all his children whom he bought with his own precious blood. As the apple of his eye, he preserves them from all evil. Him may every one taste, every one prove, every one try and see, and be convinced that he is good. He thrusts none away that come to him by faith, but preserves them, washes, sanctifies, and

saves them, and makes rich the poorest of men ; so that even though " the lions," the rich and mighty of the world, should lack and starve, yet in his Father's house there is bread enough and to spare, and therefore they who seek the Lord in him, shall want no good thing, temporal or spiritual, in time or in eternity.

PART SECOND.

11. ה Come hither, ye children, listen to me ; I will instruct you in the fear of Jehovah.
12. מ Who is the man that is fond of life, desiring to behold days of prosperity ?
13. נ Restrain thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from uttering deceit.
14. ד Turn away from evil, and perform what is good ; search for peace, and pursue it.
15. ע Jehovah's eyes are toward the righteous, and his ears toward the voice of their cry.
16. פ Jehovah's face is set against the evil-doers, to extirpate their memory from the earth.
17. צ They cried aloud, and Jehovah heard, and he delivered them from all their distresses.
18. ק Jehovah draweth near to the broken-hearted ; and the contrite in spirit he will save.
19. ר Many are the afflictions of the righteous man ; but Jehovah will deliver him from them all.
20. ש He guardeth all his bones, that not one of them is broken.
21. ת Mischief completeth the death of the wicked ; and the opponents of the righteous shall become desolate.
22. פ Jehovah redeemeth the souls of his servants ; and none who trust in him shall be confounded.

In the first part of this Psalm the delivered saint assembled the meek and devoted servants of God to join him in praise and adoration of Jehovah's name, for his goodness towards him personally, and for his works of wonder and mercy towards the children of men generally ; and in the second part he endeavours to improve the opportunity by instructing others to follow his example, in order that they may procure eternal happiness for their souls. The " children" whom the sacred poet invites to come for instruction are the (supposed) by-standers who witnessed the whole process of the joint adoration and thanksgiving of the brother saints. They are " children" in the knowledge of God, and as " the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom," the Psalmist says, " Come, and I will instruct you in the fear of Jehovah." But how does he instruct them in the fear of God ? He says, " Who is the man that is fond of חַיִּים (Chayim) lives," that is to say, of life in time and life in eternity. And why is he fond of life ? not that he may have opportunity for eating and drinking, but because he is " desiring to behold יָמִים (Yamim), many days, or times, of prosperity ;"

he is desiring to live a life of satisfaction and happiness, a life of tranquillity and peace, peace with all men, and peace with God, that he may have the opportunity and advantage of doing good many days, and laying up treasures in heaven; such an one is advised to restrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from uttering deceit. This is what David means by teaching "the fear of God," for surely the man that feareth God will neither speak evil, nor utter deceit with his lips. As for procuring prosperous days, and a two-fold peaceful and happy life, he advises him to practise the very thing he is so fond of, *i.e.*, to turn away from doing evil to others, to do all that is good, to search for peace and pursue it. The Psalmist next proceeds to impress the lesson upon the hearts of his pupils by shewing the blessed results of doing good, and the opposite of doing evil. Thus he tells them that "Jehovah's eyes," that is, His care and tender affection, are directed towards the righteous; He delights in blessing them and in doing them good, and His ears are always directed towards the voice of their cry; He is always ready to hear, to answer, and to deliver them: but the reverse is dreadful; for "His face is set against the evil doers." This expression means, His determination; He is set upon, determined, "to extirpate their memory from the earth." The 17th verse, we think, stands in close connection with the 16th, and shows that it is not as if Jehovah delighted in their destruction, but that such only is his determination provided they do not repent. Therefore, the Psalmist gives them an example in verse 17, that even such wicked men, whose doom would have been utter destruction, "when they cried aloud, Jehovah heard, and delivered them from all their distresses." Hence the reason given in verse 18, because, "Jehovah draweth near (though he was far from them before) to the broken-hearted, and the contrite in spirit He will save." (Compare Ps. cvii. 10—20.) David then proceeds, in verse 19, to guard his pupils against temptations—to acquaint them with the chastisement of children—to show that the righteous have also their troubles to fight with; but he tells them at the same time to depend on heaven's faithfulness, that the Lord will deliver his children at last, and that after all their afflictions, after all the thorns in their flesh, their bones shall not be injured—not one of them shall be broken (this was literally fulfilled in the Messiah, see John xix. 33.) In verse 21, תְּמוֹתָהּ (Temotheth) means the "completion of death," to make death certain; when, instead of repentance, the wicked man persists in doing mischief to the righteous, then his desolation is sure. The verb יָאֶשְׁמֻ (Yaeshamu) is not taken from אָשָׁם (Asham) "guilt," (as some imagine), but from שָׁמָה (Shamah) "desolation," "confusion," or "destruction."

David's escape from the danger which surrounded him in Philistia was even more wonderful than that from his own house, where he was watched to be destroyed. It was not effected by flight, nor by the assistance of friends, but his dreaded enemies drove him out of their city. King Achish (such was his proper name, though the common name for the Philistian monarchs was Abimelech, as Pharaoh was that of the Egyptian, see Gen. xii. 15, xx. 2, xxvi. 1), whose mind the Lord had turned, said to his servants concerning him: "Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore then have

ye brought him to me?" 1 Sam. xxi. 14. Thus escaped as a bird from the fowler's snare, the son of Jesse employed his harp in praising God in strains of adoration worthy of the highest intelligences. But when he saw that his danger was equally great in the country of the Philistines as in his own, he returned to the latter, and found a place of shelter in the desolate cave of Adullam, which was situated on its borders. In that dark and lonely retreat he seems to have spent a considerable time, as we shall see from the compositions which he produced there; and the foregoing Psalm was probably written there also, for it appears to have been the first place of repose he found after escaping from Philistia. And never before, surely, was that cave so honoured; never before were heard within its precincts such songs of thanksgiving and praise, as were then raised by David to the God who had so wonderfully delivered him. But the place itself was not a scene fitted to call forth cheering songs and sweet melodies. Though the prospect of a violent death from which he had just escaped converted it, as if, into a city of refuge at first, yet it was but a dreary and miserable abode; and soon again contemplating his forlorn and dangerous circumstances, his harp changed to notes of mourning.

Psalm cxlii. seems to be the first plaintive composition of David when in the cave of Adullam. The title of it is, "Maschil of David: a prayer when he was in the cave." The word מַשְׁכִּיל (Maschil), is found in the titles of thirteen Psalms. Its meaning varies somewhat according to the contents of the Psalms in the superscriptions of which it is found. Though its general signification be, "A Psalm whose sentiments express the results of a persevering philosophical contemplation;" yet, in particular, it sometimes signifies, "A lofty and sublime song;" and sometimes, "A composition of deep and instructive sentiments;" but in the present instance it signifies, "An ardent and impassioned supplication." The contents of the Psalm correspond with its title in every point; for it is indeed a serious, ardent, impassioned, and soul-touching prayer. The translators, as is often the case, have changed the present tense into the past, thereby stripping many expressions in the Psalm of their beauties; but this is remedied in our translation.

PS CXLII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XV.

(מַשְׁכִּיל MASCHIL.)

"An ardent and impassioned prayer of David when in the cave."

1. With a loud voice unto Jehovah will I cry;
With a loud voice unto Jehovah will I make supplication.
2. I will pour out before him my complaint;
My distress before him will I relate.
3. When my spirit is overwhelmed within me, and thou alone knowest my path; in what way I should direct my steps, when they have secretly laid a trap for me.

In this deplorable and destitute condition, David still remembers that he has a faithful Friend above, before whom he may pour out the troubles and

distresses of his soul. In the first two verses he tells of his resolution to cry to that Friend with a loud voice, and to lay before him all his complaints; and in the third verse he states his reason for resolving so to do,—“When my spirit is overwhelmed within me;” that is, when I am overpowered by calamity and grief—destitute of any defence—when my spirit is so broken and crushed, and my thoughts so confounded, that I am unable to devise any direction for my steps in order that I may escape the snare that is secretly laid for me: But Thou, faithful, omniscient, almighty God, knowest my path; thou alone art able to direct me now, and to give me counsel in such a time as this,—therefore I resolved to cry aloud to thee with my whole heart and might. Accordingly, David proceeds to address this heavenly Friend, and to spread his desperate condition before him.

4. O look thou on my right, and behold, there is none to recognise me:

A refuge faileth me, there is none to enquire after my soul.

5. Hence I cried unto thee, O Jehovah, saying, Thou art my refuge;

Thou my portion in the land of the living.

Such were David's reasons for crying aloud to God, and such the claims he made on his helping hand. Look thou, O Jehovah, that there is none other to help—none takes my part—none pleads my innocence—none recognises me as a friend—none cares for my soul—refuge faileth me—I tried to find it once, and fled to Philistia, but the terrors of death beset me there,—what am I to do now? how now to act? on whose name but thine can I call? Hence I cried unto thee, saying, Thou art my only refuge, Thou my portion in the land of the living. I am thine in time, and in eternity thou alone art mine. None have I besides thee; and therefore I cry to thee alone for help.

Having stated his reasons, he closes his supplication by urging his request in particular, and referring to the happy results of his deliverance.

6. Be attentive unto my complaint; for I am brought exceedingly low:

Deliver me from my persecutors; for they are much stronger than I.

7. Draw forth my soul from confinement, that she may praise thy name:

In me the righteous shall be crowned, when thou hast rewarded me.

In David's deliverance, and in the reward of his sufferings, and of his confidence in God, the righteous were to be crowned. The word כֶּתֶר (Kether) denotes a crown; and so יִכְתֶּר (yathtiru), in the text signifies, “they shall be crowned;” that is, in me shall the righteous be crowned. (How and on what authority the translators have rendered it, “shall compass me about,” we are unable to suggest.) If it be asked, How was it that, in David's deliverance, and in the reward, or recompence (as the word

גָּמַל [gamal] signifies) of his sufferings, the righteous were to be crowned?

We answer, it was because David was a type of the Messiah; his sufferings and persecutions, his faith and confidence, were all typical of Messiah; and therefore it was that for such he could expect a recompence. And what was the recompence he looked for? It was the everlasting covenant that Jehovah made with him, in which he promised that Messiah his Son should be Prince on his throne for ever, and that in him his kingdom should be everlasting. Hence we see what David means when he says, in Psalm cxvi. 7, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for Jehovah hath recompensed, or rewarded thee." This must certainly also refer to David's reward in Messiah, who, by the anguish of his soul, procured safety and redemption for the souls of men, as he farther adds in the same Psalm, "For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling: Now will I walk before Jehovah in the land of the living." This is likewise the meaning of the "recompence" David speaks of in the closing verse of Psalm xliii., "I will sing unto Jehovah, when he hath recompensed, or rewarded me;" and in the fifth verse of this Psalm he says, "I trust in thy mercy; my heart rejoiceth in thy salvation." From this also we see that his reward consisted in the promises made to him regarding the Saviour. Hence in the Psalm before us, "In me shall the righteous be crowned, when thou hast rewarded me." David was richly rewarded at last, inasmuch as the Lord had established his throne for ever in the person of Messiah, his glorious descendant; and thus surely the righteous were crowned in and by his reward.

The Psalm next in order, the cxliii., must likewise have been composed by David when in the cave of Adullam, though the authors of the Septuagint imagine it to have been written when he fled from Absalom, and for this reason it has been usually styled, "the seventh and last penitential Psalm." But even if these authors had been seven thousand in number instead of seventy, we could not withhold our censure of them on account of the gross ignorance and want of judgment which they have displayed in connexion with this Psalm. The slightest attention to the style, sentiment, and subject of it, shows clearly that it is one with the preceding, breathing the same complaints, and the same prayers and supplications, but with greater urgency and accumulation as he called to mind his enjoyments in better days. Nor need we be in the least concerned about the number of the penitential Psalms, so called, whether they be seven or only six. In the former, he spread his distressed condition before his God, and in the present (which is styled, "A Song, or Psalm of David") he pleads for an answer to his supplications.

PS. CXLIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XVI.

1. O Jehovah, hear my prayer: ponder well my supplication according to thy faithfulness;

Answer me according to thy righteousness.

But David soon remembers that it is impossible for any child of fallen Adam to stand before the holy and righteous One, for weighed in the balance of his justice, he would be found wanting: he therefore adds—

H

2. But enter not into judgment with thy servant ;
For in thy sight no man living can be justified.

Having thus entreated the Lord's answer to his prayer (as contained in the former Psalm) without entering into judgment with him, he begins to state the reason of the ardency of his supplication, and of the strong expressions he uses in it.

3. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul ; he hath crushed my
life to the ground :
He hath caused me to dwell in dark places, as (or like to) the
dead of the world.
4. Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me :
O, my heart within me is sore bewildered.

In the former Psalm, David cried for the speedy help of God to deliver him from his persecutors, because his soul was already overwhelmed within him ; and, in this, he assigns the reason why his soul was so overwhelmed : " For the enemy hath persecuted my soul ; he hath crushed down my life to the ground : He hath caused me to dwell in dark places (in the dark and gloomy cave) as the dead of the world (the dead in those days being interred in such places.) Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me." When we compare the third verse of the preceding Psalm with the third and fourth verses of that now before us, we see how intimate the connexion is between them.

David proceeds to declare the mournful effects which his physical sufferings had on his mind—how in his miserable and desolate condition he was not only without all temporal comfort, but his heart was bereft of spiritual consolation and enjoyment. Like afflicted Job, when remembering better days, in the anguish of his soul he exclaimed : " O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God watched over me : When his lamp shone above my head, and when by its light I walked amidst darkness : As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle ;" Job xxix. 2—4 : so David, calling to mind former days of happiness and peace, says—

- 5 I remembered the days of old, when I meditated on all thine
operations ;
When I deeply mused on the works of thine hands :
6. When I stretched forth mine hands unto thee ;
When my soul, as a parched land, was for thee (Selah) continually.

For what purpose, or on what authority the English translators have rendered these two verses in the present tense, I cannot comprehend. The attentive reader must see that the sense is thereby completely violated. What is it we understand when reading in the common version, " I remember the days of old, I meditate on all thy works?" What does he remember of the days of old? Why does he not tell us the subject of his remembrance? Besides, how can any man of sound judgment imagine that David could devote himself, in the midst of distress and the fear of destruction, to the study of philosophy, or find pleasure in the calm con-

templation of the works of nature? But to spend much time in exposing this erroneous translation, or rather, perversion of the passage, would be as foolish as to attempt to prove that day is not night. The Hebrew verbs here are inflexible; *הִגִּיתִי* (*hagithy*), "I have meditated;" *פִּרְשָׁתִּי* (*perasty*), "I have stretched forth." If the peculiarity of the Hebrew language does sometimes admit the rendering of such verbs in the present tense, or as participles (in some constructions), it is only in cases of absolute necessity; but in the present instance the change only tortures and destroys the sense of the passage. Ignorance of the real reference of these expressions has also been the cause of confusion in Psalm lxxvii., which is a transcript of the one under consideration (with some modifications), as we shall by-and-by see. There, as here, David complains of the great change which had taken place, and bewails his consequent misery when contrasting it with former happy days. The English translation of the fifth and sixth verses is as follows: "I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart; and my spirit made diligent search." Who does not perceive that the sweet Psalmist of Israel could never have allowed his pen to write such meaningless expressions? Could he say, that when he considered the years of ancient times, his song in the night was made in ancient times? that he communes now with his own heart, and now also, that in the ancient times his spirit made diligent search? According to this translation, the passage has neither meaning nor taste.

Thus, then, we conclude that the 143d and 77th Psalms are one in subject, sentiment, style, though not in time of composition—the latter being only an amplification of the former, and better adapted to the temple music. In both, the disconsolate Psalmist looks back upon by-gone rich enjoyments. In both, he calls to mind the golden age of his youth; he remembers that mysterious day when the prophet Samuel came to feast at Bethlehem, and anointed him to be king over Israel; when the holy oil of Jehovah's sanctuary was made the oil of gladness to him and spiritual joy; when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, filling his mind with heavenly meditations, his heart with exulting joy, and his mouth with sweet melody and adoring song; when in this frame he returned to the fields to feed his father's flocks, far from the turmoil and troubles of the world; and when he lay down in the green and quiet valleys, musing on the starry sky by night and the gay face of earth by day, and on the power, and glory, and majesty of their great Creator. Then it was that he was changed, as it were, from glory to glory, by the Holy Spirit that rested upon him, and he sang in adoring strains: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and stars which thou hast formed; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Psalm viii 3, 4. "The heavens publish the glory of God, and the works of his hands the expanse declareth. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." Psalm xix. 1, 2. "Jehovah, my God, thou art exceeding great; in glory and majesty thou art arrayed. Who investest thyself with light as with a garment . . . How manifold are thy works, O Jehovah! in wisdom hast thou made them all . . . The glory of Jehovah shall endure for ever; Jehovah shall rejoice in his own works . . . I will sing unto Jehovah while I live; I will chaunt unto my God throughout my eternal existence . . ." (Ps. civ. 1—2, 24, 31,

33. These and similar strains were sung by David during the tranquil and happy days which he now called to mind ; for now the scene was changed, and he was a fugitive for his life in the cave of Adullam, and instead of hymns of adoring praise, he poured forth ardent supplication and bitter complaint. In reference to those happy days, he says, in Ps. lxxvii. 5, 6 : " I have considered the days of old, even the years of bygone times. I called to remembrance my songs of the night seasons ; when I mused after mine own heart, and when my spirit was overrobed anew."* And again in verses 11 and 12 : " Let me remember the operations of God, yea, let me remember thy wonders of past times. When I meditated on all thy performances, and when I mused on thy works of wonder." Now in the Psalm under consideration (which is the original of the lxxvii.), we find the reason assigned for his courage being thus downcast, and his spirit overwhelmed within him ; " because," says he, " the enemy hath crushed my life down to the ground, and caused me to dwell in dark places as the dead of the world." And to this he adds, " I remembered the days of old, when I meditated on all thine operations, when I deeply mused on the works of thine hands. When I stretched forth my hands unto thee (like a beggar for bread, so he for knowledge) ; when my soul, as a parched, or weary land or ground, was for thee (Selah) continually." This latter figure is strikingly expressive of the large and exalted soul, which is never satisfied ; but like the weary ground which, from long continued drought, pants for rain, so that soul thirsts continually for more wisdom, more experience of God's loving-kindness, more knowledge of his ways, and longs to praise and glorify him more.†

Having thus related the great change that had taken place in his circumstances, and complained of his misery, David offers the following prayer :

7. Answer me speedily, O Jehovah ; for my spirit wasteth away :
Hide not thy face from me, lest I be like those descending into the grave.
8. Early let me experience thy mercy ; for I have put my trust in thee.
Make known to me the way wherein I should walk ; for unto thee I have lifted up my soul.‡

In the third verse of the preceding Psalm, David had said, that God alone knew the path in which he should walk, when his enemies had secretly laid a trap for him ; and here he pleads that God would make

* See the critical notes on the following Psalm, in which this expression is largely explained. David's spirit being overrobed anew, is expressive of the Holy Spirit's coming upon him, when his soul put off, as it were, its earthly dress, and was arrayed in the bright garments of heaven.

† Compare the introduction to Psalm viii., and the remarks after Psalm civ., regarding the early compositions of David.

‡ The lifting up of the soul is a figure taken from the Temple services, in which the priests lifted up certain parts of the sacrifices belonging to the altar : denoting thereby that they were consecrated wholly and entirely to God. So David lifted up his soul—that is, surrendered himself entirely to the Divine leading and guidance.

known to him how he should act in such circumstances of incertitude and danger. His prayer was soon answered, for Abiathar, the sole survivor of the slaughtered priests of Nob, fled to him, bringing the Breastplate with the Urim and Thummim along with him ; and by this oracle David was instructed and directed in all his ways till he ascended the throne of Israel.

9. Deliver me, O Jehovah, from mine enemies ; for to thee I repair for refuge.
10. Teach me to do thy will ; for thou art my God :
Let thy good Spirit guide me into a land of uprightness.
11. For thy name's sake, O Jehovah, quicken me ;
In thy righteousness, draw out of distress my soul ;
12. Even in thy mercy, cut off mine enemies, and destroy all oppressors of my soul.
For I am thy servant.

Thus we have seen the close connexion subsisting between Psalms cxlii. and cxliii., and the time when and the circumstances in which they were composed. But besides these, there are other two (the lxxvii. and lxxxviii.) which pertain to the same subject, which are entirely taken from the others, and of which they are, in short, but greater amplifications, with this difference only, that they were written at a later period, and fitted for the Temple services. When David ascended the throne, he arranged the tabernacle and all its services on Mount Zion—he furnished it with singers and players upon musical instruments of various kinds—he transcribed and recomposed some of his former compositions, and adapted them to the sacred music of the Levitical order. These transcripts were then divided and delivered to the head musicians of the different bands, as Heman, Asaph, Jeduthun (or Ethan), and other chief musicians of the bands belonging to the children of Korah, suited to the different instruments which they played, and the various melodies they sang. Although the whole of the musical Levites were divided only into three bands, under their leaders, Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun, yet these three were subdivided into twenty-four wards, or smaller companies. Each of these wards, or companies, numbered twelve, having one leader, and these leaders were often taken from among the Korahites, because of their permanent musical skill. According to the account given of that arrangement in chapters vi., xv., and xvi., of the first Book of Chronicles, Heman and his party were generally the chief vocal singers ; Asaph and his party were the second, under Heman, but the first, when alone in their turn ; and Jeduthun was the third, under Heman and Asaph, but the first also, as Asaph, when alone. Their vocal music and solemn songs were accompanied with the loud instruments, or cymbals, which they held in their hands, and with which they lifted the melody at every *Selah*, or pause, when they rested a while from singing. (See at the end of the Introduction about *Selah*.) Jeduthun and his party, when acting as seconds to Asaph's, used harps and violins in order to produce soft and sweet-sounding tones. Heman and his party, as already said, formed the first division of singers, and the children of Korah, who had no head musician in general, were his secondaries in the absence of the parties of Asaph and Jeduthun. The instruments on which Jeduthun's party played

were invented by himself, and hence they were called after his name, "Jeduthun."

. The 77th Psalm, as has been already stated, is an amplification, or enlargement, of the two Psalms last considered, and which David composed for the Temple service, arranging it, at the same time, in proper order of style and division. Inasmuch as the Psalm was intended to be sung by Asaph, seconded by Jeduthun and his party with the harps of their own invention, called "Jeduthun," the superscription, or title, which it bears is as follows: "Lamnatzeach" (which is the dedicatory title, see end of Introduction), "A song for Asaph;" that is, to be sung by Asaph and his party, "upon Jeduthun;" that is, with the band of secondaries who played the harp of Jeduthun. This Psalm is divided into four paragraphs by three *Selahs*, which, while they have their proper and distinct meaning at the end of the sentences where they are inserted, indicate also the pauses for the vocal bands. Thus Asaph and his party, with the cymbals in their hands (which, however, were never used till the pause of *Selah*), opened the Psalm by singing it to its proper melody, while Jeduthun and his party seconded it with their harps. When the Asaphites had finished the first sentence by arriving at the pause *Selah*—which they uttered in a very loud voice—they began to fill the Temple with the loud sounds of their cymbals. At such a pause all the instruments of the Levites were set in action, and continued until—the singing Asaphites having rested meanwhile, and being then ready to begin the next sentence—a signal was given, and all the loud instruments ceased, so that the words of the Psalm might be heard; but Jeduthun's party seconded the singers with their mild harps until next pause.

In going through this Psalm, the reader is earnestly requested to compare the sentences of it with the two preceding Psalms, and he will see how entirely coincident they are in subject, in sentiment, and in poetic style.

PS. LXXVII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XVII.

PART FIRST.

1. My voice was directed unto God, when aloud I did cry ;
My voice was directed unto God, and he attended unto me.
2. In the day of my distress my God I sought ; mine arm was spread
forth by night without ceasing :
My soul refused to be comforted.
3. I made mention of the Lord, and bitterly roared ;
I mused, and my spirit was overwhelmed. (*Selah*) continually.

In these three verses we have an accurate description of David's miserable condition in the cave of Adullam, when he composed the cxlii. Psalm ; in which he says—"With a loud voice unto Jehovah will I cry ; with a loud voice unto Jehovah will I make supplication. I will pour out before him my complaint ; my distress before him will I relate ;" and, farther, in the third verse he states that his spirit was overwhelmed within him—not knowing how he should act, nor finding any comfort. In the first three verses of this Psalm these past troubles are essentially repeated, though with a slight alteration in the figures employed. The figure of the con-

tinual stretching forth of his hand by night in waiting for Jehovah in the dark cave, is very touching, and that in the third verse is equally so—"I made mention of the Lord, and bitterly roared"—remembering him as the only God, the only fountain of hope in his desperate condition. "I mused:" after having thus cried and roared in prayer and supplication, he became as if tired at last, and began to muse—and what was the result of his musing? "And my spirit was overwhelmed, Selah, continually," or always. As soon as *Selah* was uttered, the Asaphites paused in singing, but seized their cymbals, and, in company with the whole bands, greatly elevated the tune, until they began the next sentence, as in the manner explained in the introduction to this Psalm.

PART SECOND.

4. Thou hast kept mine eyes waking: I was stunned with terror
and could not speak.*
5. I have considered the days of old; the years of bygone times.
6. I called to remembrance my songs of the night seasons;
When I mused after mine own heart,
And when my spirit was overrobed anew.†
7. Will my God for ever throw me away? and will he not be reconciled any more?
8. Is his tender mercy completely exhausted? Shall his promise fail for all generations?
9. Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in wrath shut up his compassion, Selah, for ever?

In the first part, David mentions the prayers and supplications which he offered in the cave, when his spirit was overwhelmed within him on account of his outward calamities. In the second, he relates what he endured within. In the fourth verse, he tells us that he was kept in continual agitation during the night seasons, and that his eyes were held waking—especially when he remembered the days of old, and his spiritual enjoyments then. The agreement in subject, sentiment, and style between the fifth and sixth verses of this Psalm and the same verses in the cxliii. proves, notwithstanding the somewhat different phraseology, that these Psalms are one connected composition, and having reference to the same circumstances.

* The word נִפְחָמְתִּי (Niphamty) comes from נָפַח (Paam), "a repeated striking" of any thing, and is wonderfully expressive of a heart struck with terror, and that continually.

† The word שָׁמַח (Chaphos), signifies "a changing of garments," to put off one dress and put on another." See 2 Chron. xviii. 29, xxxv. 22; 1 Kings xxii. 30. Here it is gloriously descriptive of inspiration, when the soul of the prophet was stripped, as it were, of its usual dress, the body, and wrapt in that of the Holy Spirit. It was when, in the night seasons, he mused on his happy days and on the wonders of God, that the Spirit came upon him and invested his soul with a new power to compose these glorious "songs" in the night seasons. (See Exposition of Psalm cxliii., especially verses 5, 6. See also the Introduction to Ps. viii. Chronologically Ps. v.)

10. Then I said, I failed sore ; surely this change was effected by the right hand of the Most High.

David, in his extremity, gives way to doubt, and begins to despair of deliverance, saying, as in the 9th verse, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in wrath shut up his compassion for ever?" But he is soon convinced that such thoughts were sinful ; and he remembers that the great change which had taken place in his condition had been brought about by God for the promotion of his own purposes, and that he was still the same merciful Jehovah that he ever was. He therefore says, "Then I said, I failed sore." The Hebrew word חָלָתִי (Chalothy) has scarcely a sufficiently expressive substitute in the English language. The first meaning of it is, "fainting" or "staggering from weakness;" but here it is used metaphorically for "erring or failing grievously," caused no doubt by weakness of faith and of mind. "I failed sore," says he, for "surely this change," that is, in his condition, "was effected by the right hand of the Most High." By "the right hand," he means "mature and well arranged providence;" that is, that it was not a mere chance—that Jehovah had not forgotten to be gracious—that he was the same God as in the days of old—the same God, whose ways David represents as being in the sanctuary.

11. Let me remember the operations of God ; yea, let me remember thy wonders of times past.
 12. When I meditated on all thy performances ;
 When I mused on thy works of wonder.
 13. O God, in the sanctuary is thy way :
 Where is there a god so exalted as our God ?

The expression, "Jehovah's way is in the sanctuary," is taken from the High Priest's entering into the Most Holy place, whither no one could follow him : so Jehovah's way—that is, his dealings with us, and the arrangements of his providence—is mysterious ; it is in the sanctuary, whither none can come, with which none may interfere, nor may any say to God, What doest thou ? Some critics, who do not understand the meaning of the word בְּקֹדֶשׁ (Bakodesh) here, invariably put "holiness" instead of "sanctuary," supposing it to be a more literal rendering ; but it is incorrect, and perverts the sense of the passage.

14. Thou art the wonder-working God ; thou hast displayed thy might among the nations.
 15. With a mighty arm hast thou delivered thy people—
 The children of Jacob and Joseph. Selah, always.

The "Selah" here stands in the Hebrew not only to denote the usual pause at the close of the third division of the Psalm, but it has the signification "always," or "continually;" that is, that Jehovah not only delivered his people out of Egypt, but continued still to deliver them out of

all their troubles. This was David's consolation. In the second part of the Psalm he had told us, that whereas he had been so dispirited and down-cast by reason of the weight of his calamities, as to question thus with himself, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious," &c.; now, having begun to call to remembrance Jehovah's faithfulness towards him in former days, and his works of wonder in the times of old, he was ashamed of his sinful weakness; and his hope revived, and his faith was strengthened. The remembrance of these things encouraged him anew to put his confidence in the Lord, whose ways are in the sanctuary—who "doth not afflict willingly," nor cause any of his servants to suffer for no purpose; but on the contrary, what they suffer is for their good, and also for the promotion of his glory.

PART FOURTH.

16. The waters perceived thee, O God, the waters perceived thee; they trembled :
The depths also shook convulsively.
17. The clouds streamed down waters; the skies resounded : thine arrows also hurried abroad.
18. The sound of thy thunder whirled around; lightnings illuminated the globe :
The earth was convulsively shaken; yea, she trembled.
19. Thine highroad is through the sea, and thy path through mighty waters; though thy footsteps are not perceived.
20. Like sheep didst thou lead thy people, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

In the fourth and last part of the Psalm, David continues the relation of Jehovah's mighty actions in the days of old. Compare the solemn and magnificent description in this part, of the display of God's almighty power in the deliverance of his people, with the third chapter of the prophecy of Habakkuk. From many expressions in them both we may learn, that Israel's deliverance from Egypt, and the wonders performed at the Red Sea and at Sinai, are not exclusively referred to, but also the supernatural lightnings and thunders in Joshua's battles with the Canaanites, and all the other miracles which were performed before the eyes of Israel.

Psalm lxxxviii. is likewise a repetition of the cxlii. and cxliii., every figure, sentiment, and expression being taken from the description which they contain of David's distress when in the cave of Adullam. But while the lxxvii. was intended to be sung in the Temple in commemoration of troubles which, through the mercy of God, had been completely removed and turned into joy; the intention of the transcription of this Psalm, and the subject it was designed to celebrate, is of quite a different nature. Its superscription, besides the dedicatory title, Lamnatzeach, reads thus: "A vocal song for the sons of Korah," על מַחֲלַת לְעֹנֹת (Al Machlath Leanoth), intended "for a fainting affliction," or "for a grievous distress," or "for a grievous humiliation;" an ardent prayer to be performed by Heman the Ezrahite. Whichever of these three interpretations may be best suited to the Hebrew words "Al Machlath Leanoth,"

the Jews have all along understood by it, that this Psalm was intended as a prayer to be offered for an afflicted man on a bed of sickness, and they use it as such to this day. Many Christian commentators also, without enquiring into the origin or subject of it, have adopted the absurd opinion of the Jews. Hence they search among the suffering Jews to find one to whom the strains of lamentation and woe in the Psalm may be applicable, and failing to discover any in such melancholy circumstances, they very injudiciously set down Hezekiah, when on the bed of sickness, as the person intended. We need not say a word to prove the erroneousness of this opinion, but simply allow the reader to go carefully over the Psalm, and then judge whether a single sentence of it can be applicable to a man on a sick-bed. Besides, the Hebrew scholar cannot fail to discover David's poetic style throughout the composition; and indeed, any attentive reader must, after mature consideration, perceive that every figure in it is taken from his miserable condition whilst in the dark cave. For ourselves, we hesitate not to maintain that the thrilling lamentations and bitter complaints which the Psalm contains, taken in connexion with the import of its title—"a grievous humiliation," or "fainting affliction"—can be applicable to none but to the "Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief," whom "the Lord was pleased to humiliate and put to grief, that he might see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied." Isa. liii. 3, 10, 11. The father and type of the Messiah collected in this Psalm the figures under which he represented his own grievous afflictions, when they reached their acme in the dark cave of his refuge; but the Spirit made him utter in it the language of a soul exercised with such suffering as none ever experienced but He who sweated great drops of blood in Gethsemane, of which terrible night the Psalm is a description.

Heman, as has been already stated, was the first of the chief vocal musicians in David's bands. He was himself a Korabite. When he was in company with the bands of Asaph and Jeduthun, they formed his secondaries; but this Psalm was intended to be sung by Heman, seconded by some of the sons of Korah, who were the chief musicians of the smaller wards or bands. It is divided into three paragraphs by two *Selahs*; and the peculiarity of it is, that it concludes as it begins, with bitter complaints. The sufferer found no alleviation—he was ready to be offered, though he prayed the Father that, if it were possible, the cup might be removed from him. To none else but Jesus, in his fearful forebodings in the garden, and when afterwards seized by his murderers, can the Psalm be applied.

PS. LXXXVIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XVIII.

PART FIRST.

(Lamnatzeach) "To the Chief Cause of all Events.

A VOCAL SONG FOR THE SONS OF KORAH.

An ardent Prayer, concerning the grievous affliction.

To be sung by Heman the Ezrahite."

1. O Jehovah, God of my salvation,
I cried by day: by night I am now before thee.

2. Let my prayer come before thee :
Incline thine ear to the sound of my wailing.
3. For, fraught with affliction was my soul :
Now draweth my life nigh to the grave.
4. I am equal with those that go down into the pit :
I became like a man without strength.
5. Dismissed among the dead, like the slain inmates of a tomb,
Whom thou rememberest no longer ;
Because they were cut off by thine hand.
6. Thou hast placed me in a pit of the lowest regions—
In thick darkness—in a deep abyss.
7. Upon me leaned thy fury ;
Yea, all thy billows thou brakedst upon me. Selah (continually.)

The melancholy lamentations and dismal complaints of this Psalm have scarcely a parallel in Scripture, especially in the one (above-mentioned) peculiar feature, that no ray of light or of comfort penetrates the gloom which pervades it throughout. Even Psalm xxii., which contains the tragic description of the scenes at Calvary, concludes in cheering and triumphant strains, because the resurrection of Christ and its glorious consequences are anticipated. But this Psalm, being intended to represent the "grievous affliction" or "humiliating distress" which, previous to his crucifixion, he was to undergo on that awful night, when he said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto, death," Matt. xxvi. 38, is entirely plaintive. In the 1st verse, the sufferer says that he had cried by day unto Jehovah, the God of his salvation (that is, the God who alone was able to raise him from the dead, and render him a conqueror), and that now he came before him in the night of his greatest distress (compare the 2d verse of Psalm xxii. or Psalm xiii. in this book.) The 3d verse exactly corresponds with the Saviour's language in Gethsemane, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Verses 4th, 5th, and 6th contain figures which are exclusively taken from David's sufferings in the cave (compare the 3d verse of Ps. cxliii. or Ps. xvi. in this book.) Verse 5th refers to sinners cut off in their wickedness : "Whom thou rememberest or regardest no more, because they were cut off by thine hand, or, in thy fierce anger," *i. e.*, in thy righteous indignation, according to the rectitude of thy government. How awful and how harrowing is the figure in verse 7th, "Upon me leaned thy fury," upon the holy and innocent Lamb the wrath of a righteous and grievously-offended God was wholly concentrated—"All thy billows thou brakest upon me, continually ;" the surge of an ocean of fury brake upon him, and assuaged when it had dashed against him. The word אלַי (*alai*) "upon me," of the first clause of this verse falls also to the last, as is often the case in Hebrew poetry.

PART SECOND.

8. Thou hast removed mine acquaintances far from me ;
Thou hast made me an abomination unto them :
Now am I shut up in confinement ; I cannot come out.

9. Mine eye is wasting by reason of affliction :
O Jehovah, all day long have I cried unto thee :
Even unto thee have I stretched forth my hand.
10. Wilt thou show miracles to the dead ?
Shall the mouldering skeletons arise to praise thee, Selah
(always) ?

If the first part of the Psalm was intended to represent the agony of the Saviour in Gethsemane, we cannot fail to discover in the remaining parts of it the representation of what he endured when he was apprehended and bound by his enemies, and deserted by his disciples. Verse 8th (compare it with verse 18) furnishes decisive evidence of this. Not merely did his disciples forsake him, but Peter, his "lover and friend" (as it is in verse 18th) denied him. רִפְאִים (Rephaim), in verse 10, denotes the mouldering skeletons of the dead after their bodies are reduced to their original dust. (For the sentiments contained in verse 10 see the exposition of verses 11 and 12, with which it stands combined.)

PART THIRD.

11. Shall thy loving kindness be published in the grave ?
Thy faithfulness in the place of decay ?
12. Shall thy wonder-works be manifested in the regions of
gloom ?
Thy righteousness in the land of oblivion ?

The language contained in verses 10, 11, and 12, may startle us at the first sight, but when we remember who the speaker is, we see the sublime argument in the whole. Would there have been such a thing as resurrection to immortal life in glory, had not Jesus brought "life and immortality to light ?" Here he prays the Father that he would raise him up and make him the "first born from the dead ;" else, says he, "How wilt thou show miracles (of resurrection) to the dead ?" "How shall thy wonder-works be manifested in the regions of gloom," &c. All this could not have been done without the death and resurrection of the Saviour ; but by them all this is secured.

13. But I did cry aloud unto thee, O Jehovah,—
In the morning also shall my prayers come before thee.
14. Why, O Jehovah, shouldst thou push away my soul ?
Why hide thy face from me ?
15. I am exceedingly distressed—I am swooning away from great
agitation :
I was heavy loaded with thy terrors ; O, I am dismayed.

The words וְגֹעַץ מִנְעִיר (Vegovea Minoar), in verse 15, are usually rendered, "And ready to die from my youth up." Now the word גֹּעַץ (Gava), wherever it occurs, signifies "a swooning or fainting to death,"

but never "a readiness to die" (see Gen. vi. 17, vii. 21, xxv. 8—17, xxxv. 29; Num. xx. 29.) To say that a man is ready to die *from his youth up* is absurd in any point of view. Speaking absolutely, every man, whether in youth or in age, is liable to death at any moment. But there is no word in the original answering to the word "ready." The reason of this mistake on the part of the translators is, perhaps, not so much ignorance of the Hebrew, as want of care in considering in a passage of this kind, the other significations of a single but leading word. One word in the Hebrew (and indeed in any language) may have different significations, and if the one renders the passage unintelligible, another may give it strong significance, and restore the order of the whole sentence. Though נָעַר (Noar) sometimes signifies "youth," it does also signify "agitation," or "violent shaking;" thus it is rendered Judg. xvi. 20; Isa. xxxiii. 15; and also in Nehem. v. 13, where the word occurs three times, and is always rendered by "shaking." The last passage reads thus: "Also I *shook* my lap, and said, so shall God *shake* out every man from his house . . . even thus be *shaken* out," &c. From this passage we see what manner of *shaking* was conveyed by the word in question. Such is its meaning in the verse under consideration, "I am also swooning, and fainting away from great *agitation*, or violent shaking," i. e. expressive of the extreme sufferings to which he was subjected, as he says further, "I was heavy loaded with thy terrors, and I am dismayed."

16. Upon me were distilled thy fierce furies,
Thy terror consumed me.

The word עָבַר (Ovru), is taken from עָבַר (Avar), which often signifies a "running down in drops," "to pass upon in drops," "to trickle." So it should be rendered Cant. v. 5, 13. Sometimes it also signifies, "to press upon," "to lay a burden upon," as in Deut. xxiv. 5. But in our verse it means, that Jehovah's arrows were directed at him from above—that his wrath continually dropped upon him, leaving him no rest from trouble and affliction, and no time to breathe.

17. Like waters they compassed me daily—
Now they unitedly surround me.

This refers to the sufferings and afflictions produced by the "fierce fury," and by the "terrors" of an offended God, as mentioned in verse 16. These used formerly to come in succession, as it were, one after another, and to compass him in turn; but in that dreadful hour—in that agonizing night, all pangs of death, of terror, and of misery were united together—they all unitedly surrounded him. To all this was added the desertion of him by all friends, which is spoken of in the following and last verse of this extraordinary Oracle of lamentation and woe.

18. Thou hast removed far from me both lover and friend;
All mine acquaintances withdrew themselves.

How striking the literal fulfilment of these words in that woeful night

when the Son of man was seized by the hand of sinners ! Where was then the courageous friend, Peter, who a little before offered to die for his Master, or where the beloved John, who leaned a little ago on his Master's breast ? "Thou hast removed far away from me both lover and friend." The word מִשְׁחָח (Machshoch), in the second clause, is comprehensive and emphatic enough to signify a withdrawing by refusing to acknowledge him—by denying him ; but we think that we have here also an indication that the Lord caused them to withdraw themselves, not to be involved in the danger, though the fact remaineth that Christ was deserted by them. (See for the import of the verb [Chasoch] in Gen. xx. 6, xxii. 12 ; 1 Sam. xxv. 39 ; Jer. xiv. 10.)

The information which the inspired narrative supplies regarding David's residence in the cave is so very limited, that we are unable to say how long he was obliged to remain there ; but it is evident from the above Psalms that it must have been for a considerable period. He was not alone, however, all the time ; for, "when his brethren and all his father's house heard of it, they went down thither to him." We are not told how they became informed of the place of his retreat ; but their meeting must have been a painful one. To see him whom the Lord, by the prophet Samuel, had anointed to be king over Israel—to see him, instead of being honoured as such, a persecuted and proscribed fugitive in the cave of Adullam, must have proved a heavy blow to their hopes, and a severe trial of their faith in the Divine promise. When the tidings spread that David was in the cave, and that his father's family had betaken themselves thither to him, many distressed and discontented Israelites—and these must have been numerous in Saul's reign—likewise resorted to him ; and he soon saw himself at the head of four hundred men, who acknowledged him as their captain. He now ventured to go forth of the cave, and the first step he took was to provide for the safety and comfort of his father and mother ; which he did by placing them under the protection of the king of Moab. Being warned by the prophet Gad on his return to Adullam, to abide no longer in the cave, he removed with his men to the forest of Hareth. When Saul heard that he was in that quarter with a multitude of men, he was highly incensed, and accused his servants who were around him, especially his son Jonathan, of conspiring against him by entering into a league with the son of Jesse, and by withholding from him all information regarding the movements and plots of the latter. In reply to this charge Doeg the Edomite said, that he saw David (it was in his flight to Philistia) coming to Nob to Ahimelech the high priest ; who enquired of the Lord for him, and gave him victuals, and the sword of Goliath. This statement increased the wrath of the king, and immediately resolving to make a terrible example of the priests of the Lord at Nob, he summoned Ahimelech and his fellows to appear before him at Ramah in Gibeath, where he then was. David was informed of this (doubtless by some fugitive who might have resorted to him at that very time, and who might have heard and witnessed Saul's proceedings at Ramah), and was exceedingly grieved on account of the danger to which the priests were exposed from the foul accusation of the cruel Edomite. It was on this occasion accordingly, that he composed the 52d Psalm, the superscription of which is : "Lamnatzeach," dedicatory

title—Dedicated to the Lord, who is the Chief Cause of all Events (see Introduction to this book, towards the close); “Maschil Le David” (see about the word “Maschil,” page 111.) “A serious contemplation of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, saying, David came into the house of Ahimelech.”* The Psalm is divided into three parts by two *Selahs*.

PS. LII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XIX.

PART FIRST.

1. Why boastest thou thyself of mischief, O thou mighty man ?
Why boastest thou in reproaching God all day long ?

The common version is, “Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God *endureth* continually.” Here we have another instance in which the plainest and simplest phrase is grossly violated, owing to want of care on the part of the translators in searching for the real meaning of one word which has several significations. It is quite obvious that there must be something wrong in the translation, for what has the wickedness of Doeg to do with “the goodness of God, which *endureth* continually?” It is likewise to be observed, that the word “*endureth*” is a supplement, and has therefore no word answering to it in the original. Now, what could David mean by asking the murderous Doeg, why he boasts in mischief; and then, by adding, “the mercy of God all day long?”—for this must be the literal rendering according to the common version. The attempts of commentators to elicit sense from the phrase have only tended to make it more obscure. The Hebrew word חֶסֶד (*chesed*), which is rendered “goodness” in the clause before us, has a very comprehensive meaning. Originally it signifies the “abundance,” the “overflowing” of any thing. Hence it is used to denote the abundance of goodness or overflowing mercy exercised, either by God towards man, or by man towards his fellow-men; or even the abundance of gratitude and faithfulness exercised by man towards God. But the word is often used also to denote “extreme sinfulness,” or “overflowing wickedness;” and hence it is often placed to signify “reproach,” for what is a greater reproach to a man than extreme wickedness? or what is a greater reproach to God than a man immersed in wickedness and sin? So the word is rendered in Prov. xiv. 34, “Sin is a reproach to the nations;” and so it should be rendered xxv. 10, of that book, “Lest he that heareth thee reproach thee.” Its meaning is the same in the clause under consideration: Why boastest thou

* In 1 Sam. xxii. 20—23, we are told that Abiathar, the sole survivor of the priests, escaped to David, and informed him of the terrible destruction of his father's house; but there can be no doubt that this Psalm was written before the slaughter took place. In the title we have only the accusation mentioned, but nothing of the consequences; as some time must necessarily have elapsed between the order issued for their appearance before Saul at Ramah, and their arrival and murder there. When David wrote this Psalm, therefore, he had heard only of Doeg's accusation, but trembled to think what might be the consequences.

thyself of mischief, O thou mighty man? Why boastest thou in reproaching, or even, blaspheming God, all day long?"—the words **מַה תִּתְהַלֵּל** (Mah Tithallel), "why boastest thou," of the first clause falling also upon the second, as is often the case in Hebrew poetry. David proceeds to describe the wickedness and malice of Doeg in the following verses—

2. Oppression dost thou carve with thy tongue,
Like with a sharp razor which works cunningly.

The figure here is taken from a cunning carver in wood, who, with his sharp razor, or rather sharp tool, works so wonderfully as to make figures out of it which could never have been expected. The malicious Doeg is represented as carving oppression, or grievous calamities with his tongue, with which he works cunningly like the carver with his iron tool. The word **חֹשֶׁב** (Choshev), when a noun, signifies "an inventor," "an embroiderer," "embroidery," "inwrought work," "one that works in any cunning work," "a cunning carver;" in like manner, when it appears as a verb, it bears all these significations. But in the present instance it means, "to carve cunningly," and stands as a figure for Doeg's tongue-plotting calamity and oppression.

3. Thou lovest evil more than good;
Falsehood more than to speak what is just, Selah, always.

The Selah, while it stands in its usual place to denote the pause, has a peculiar significance which the translation generally fails to bring fully out. It is here very emphatic in the original, and intimates, that it was not at some particular times merely, that Doeg preferred evil and falsehood to doing good and to speaking what was just, but that he did so always, or continually. It is as if the Selah had been placed at the beginning of the verse: "Thou lovest *always* evil more than good; thou lovest *always* falsehood more than to speak that which is just and true."

PART SECOND.

4. Art thou fond of all matters of destruction, O deceitful tongue?
5. The Lord therefore shall utterly destroy thee; he shall crush thee,
And pluck thee out of thy tent,
And root thee out of the land of the living. Selah, for ever.

Having described the terrible judgment which would befall the wicked and bloody Edomite, David proceeds to show its results and its influence upon the community of the righteous.

PART THIRD.

6. This shall the righteous observe, and be afraid;
And regarding him, they shall triumphantly exclaim—

7. Behold, this is the man who did not make God his defence ;
But trusted in the multitude of his riches ; and depended on his
oppression.

When Jehovah executes his terrible judgments on the wicked, men see it, and fear the Lord and his righteousness : " For when thy judgments come down upon, or are executed in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness." Isa. xxvi. 9. Then the righteous see the effects, and are strengthened in their faith. " This," that is, the destruction of Doeg, " shall the righteous observe, and be afraid, וְעָלַי (Vealav) ; and regarding, or concerning him, וְשָׁחֲקוּ (Yischaku), they shall triumphantly exclaim." The word שָׁחֲקוּ (Sechok) does not only signify a laughing to scorn, or having in derision, by the mere act of looking triumphantly and laughing to scorn, but it signifies also, " deriding in words," which words follow in the 7th verse, " Behold, this is the man who did not make God, מַעֲזוֹ (Mauzo), his defence, or fortress ; but trusted in the multitude of his riches ; and יָעַז (Yaoz) depended on his oppression, or, and made oppression his defence ;" that is, he would not make God his defence, but oppression.—In the close of the Psalm, David speaks of himself, and of his confidence in God, that he would yet enjoy his goodness in his sanctuary.

8. But I shall be as a flourishing olive in the house of God ;
I have put my trust in the mercy of God for evermore.
9. I will praise thee always for what thou hast done ;
And I will ever hope in thy name.
For thou art good towards thy devoted ones.

THE SLAUGHTER OF THE PRIESTS OF NOB BY DOEG.

Ahimelech and his brethren appeared before Saul in obedience to his summons. He repeated to them Doeg's false and wicked charge, and thereupon accused Ahimelech of having conspired against him with the son of Jesse. In vain did Ahimelech protest his innocence of the crime imputed to him. Saul was determined on revenge ; and doomed him, and all his brethren with him, to immediate death. His soldiers around him, appalled at this fearful sentence passed against the priests of the Lord, sternly refused at his bidding to execute it ; but a willing and fitting instrument was found in the malicious and inhuman Doeg. At the tyrant's command, which needed not to be repeated, " he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day four score and five persons that did wear a linen ephod." Unappeased by even this horrid massacre, Saul also doomed the city of the priests to destruction by the same murderous hand. " And Nob smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword." 1 Sam. xxii. 18, 19. Abiathar, one of the sons of Ahimelech, alone escaped. He came to David, and communicated to him the bloody and woeful tidings. How deeply must his heart have been pierced with sorrow thereby !—the more deeply, inasmuch as he could not but reflect that he had been the chief, though innocent, oc-

casian of such dreadful slaughter and destruction. "And David said unto Abiathar, I thought of it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house. Abide thou with me, fear not; for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life; but with me thou shalt be in safe guard." 1 Sam. xxii. 22, 23.

Several of the Psalms appear to have been composed by David about this period, while under the distressing impressions which this terrible event had produced on his mind, and the peculiarly critical and unhappy circumstances in which he thus felt himself placed. They bear strong internal evidence of this, and are, as far as we can judge, the following, viz.: the xciv., which must have been composed under the first excitement, as will be seen upon due consideration, and the x., xi., xii., xiii., and xiv., all which shall be successively explained.

PS. XCIV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XX.

PART FIRST.

1. O Jehovah, thou God of vengeance;
O thou God of vengeance, appear in glory.
2. Be exalted, O thou universal Judge;
Render a recompence unto the insurgents.
3. How long shall the wicked, O Jehovah—
How long shall the wicked triumph?
4. They foam, they talk rebelliously;
All the workers of iniquity conspire together.
5. They crush thy people, O Jehovah,
And afflict thine heritage.
6. They slay the widow and the stranger,
They also murder the fatherless.
7. Yet they imagine that God will not see,
That the God of Jacob will not regard.

The visible excitement under which the Psalmist penned this poem, the vigorous and sharp expressions he uses for calling down the speedy vengeance of the high and terrible Judge, and the extreme and outrageous wickedness of the murderers which he describes in this first part of the Psalm, render it beyond doubt that David must have composed it under the first strong impression which Abiathar's information produced. "O Jehovah, thou God of vengeance." Here, as in verse 3d, the author is stopped by his fullness of feeling, and pauses for a moment to gather strength; then he proceeds, "O thou God of vengeance, appear in thy glory." This language reminds us of that of the prophet Nahum, who, when addressing the apostate city of Nineveh, says, "Jehovah is a jealous and avenging God; Jehovah is a God of vengeance and of fury; Jehovah taketh vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies." Verse 2d, "Be exalted (in judgment) O thou universal Judge; render a recompence unto the insurgents." The Hebrew word גָּאֵם (Geim) here has its proper meaning, such as, "rise up," i.e., to slay others,

"rebels," but it cannot mean mere "proud men," which is only the figurative derivation, for the real meaning of the word is "to rise up," to "lift one's self up," *i.e.*, insurrection for murder is here the meaning of it. Verse 3d, "How long shall the wicked, O Jehovah." Here a pause again occurs, as in verse 1st. Then he finishes the sentence, "How long shall the wicked triumph?" Verse 4th, "They foam or boil," *i.e.*, as water doth with the fire, so the murderers do with fury. יָבִיעַר (Yabiu) here is taken from בָּעָה (Beah) "to swell," or "bubble," as boiling water. "They talk rebelliously." This is the meaning here of עָתָק (Athak) "rebellious," "impudently" (so 1 Sam. ii. 3; Ps. xxxi. 18.) "All the workers of iniquity conspire together;" so יִתְאָמְרוּ (Yithamru) here signifies, "they bespeak themselves," make an agreement together, or "conspire;" so it is sometimes used in the singular, "Amar," to denote "one making up his mind for some thing," as in Exod. ii. 14; 2 Sam. xxi. 16. David next describes the fearful consequences of their conspiracy; how they crush Jehovah's people—murder the widow, the stranger, and the fatherless. As the widows and the fatherless here refer to the widows and fatherless of the murdered priests (which latter are to be understood as God's heritage, which they slay and afflict); so, by the "strangers" we must understand, either such as might have been sojourning in the unfortunate city of Nob, and shared an equal fate with all the murdered inhabitants, or we may understand by the word גֵּר (Ger), the proselytes that were in the city of the priests, such as the Gibeonites, whom Saul slew in great numbers (see 2 Sam. xxi. 1—5), and who must have chiefly resided there (see Josh. ix. 23.) But the consummation of their wickedness is described in verse 7th, that after all the innocent blood shed, "Yet they imagine that God will not see, and that the God of Jacob will not regard."

PART SECOND.

The second part of this Psalm is addressed to the infatuated rebels, who imagined that Jehovah would neither see their wickedness nor punish them for it.

8. Discern this, O ye brutish among the people;
O ye fools, when will ye become wise?
9. He that planteth the ear, shall He not hear?
If He formed the eye, shall He not see?
10. He who chastiseth the nations, shall He not correct?
O, He teacheth man knowledge!

"O, He teacheth man knowledge," *i.e.*, man is taught to know God by the very wonders of creation—he needs not go far; let him look to himself, and consider the mysterious and wonderful nature of those organs by which he hears, and sees, &c., and learn the omniscience of his Creator from them if he desires to be wise. The word הַמְלִיכִד (Hamla-med) stands here in the place of מְלִיכִד (Hu Melamed), "He teaches

man knowledge," if man only would avail himself of the opportunity, and learn.

The third part, which extends to the end of the Psalm, treats of the Psalmist's experience of the mysterious, but at the same time righteous ways of Jehovah, in his dealings with the children of men; and that after all, the righteous finds himself happy and rewarded, while the wicked are utterly destroyed.

PART THIRD.

11. Jehovah knoweth the devices of men,
That they are altogether vanity.
12. Happy is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord,
And whom thou teachest out of thy law ;
13. To becalm himself from the days of adversity,
Till the pit be digged for the rebel.
14. For Jehovah will not abandon his people ;
His inheritance he will not desert.
15. For the Ever-Righteous shall return in judgment ;
O follow him, all ye upright in heart.
16. Who else will rise up for me against the destroyers ?
Who else will stand for me against the abettors of iniquity ?
17. Unless Jehovah had afforded me assistance,
How soon would my soul have retired to dwell in silence ?
18. When I thought my foot had slipped,
Thine abundant mercy, O Jehovah, supported me.
19. When anxieties increased within me,
Thy comforts cheered my soul.
20. Shall the throne of perversion be associated with thee,
Which frameth oppression by a statute ?
21. They form themselves in bands for the righteous souls ;
They condemn the innocent blood.
22. But Jehovah shall be unto me an high fortress,
And my God the rock of my refuge,
23. And He shall carry their affliction upon them,
And cut them off in their mischief ;
Yea, Jehovah our God shall cut them off.

It is evident that verses 12th and 13th stand in close connection. Inasmuch as it was stated in verse 11th that the Lord mocks the devices of men, and foresees that they are vain, David proceeds to state the blessedness of the man who is under the chastisement of a kind and loving Father, as he then was, and who is so instructed in Jehovah's mysterious ways as to be able to becalm himself, or to keep himself at ease from the days of adversity, until Heaven's purposes are matured, as well for his deliverance as for the punishment of the wicked that oppress him. "For," says he in verse 15th, "the עֲדֵךְ יְדֵךְ (Ad Tzedek), Ever-Righteous," i.e., the ever-righteous God, "shall return, or shall come rapidly in judgment;" and

then follows a call to the "upright in heart." The 20th verse contains a powerful argument against Saul's wicked government. Israel was a Theocracy; for even under an earthly prince they were to be Jehovah's "royal priesthood," and therefore David asks the Lord, "Shall the throne of perversion?" *i.e.*, shall Saul's bloody dominion? "shall he who framed oppression," in the slaughter of the priests, "by a חֹק (Chok), a statute," by a royal law, "be associated with thee, thou ever-righteous God of Israel?" He then further represents how Saul and Doeg formed themselves in bands to condemn and destroy the innocent priests, and to shed their blood like water; and closes the Psalm by declaring his confidence in Jehovah his high Fortress, and the Rock of his refuge, while he predicts the utter ruin of Saul and his wicked associates.

PS. X. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXI.

1. Why, O Jehovah, standest thou at a distance?
Withdrawing thyself in time of distress.
2. By the rising of the wicked the poor are set on fire,
Ensnared by the devices which they contrived.

"By the rising of the wicked," *i.e.* when the wicked grow strong; so גָּאָוָה (Gaavah) denotes "rising," "swelling," (see Isa. ix. 18; Jer. xii. 5), "the poor are set on fire," *i.e.* devoured by their sword, referring to Nob, the city of the priests, whose inhabitants were utterly destroyed by Saul, because they were "ensnared by the devices which he contrived," viz. that they were guilty of conspiracy with David against him.

3. For the wicked waxeth proud in getting his soul's desire,
And the robber doth boast in provoking Jehovah.

There are two terms used in this verse which have nearly the same meaning; the one הִלֵּל (Hillel), which means to exalt one's self through pride and insolence, as in Ps. v. 5, xlix. 6, lxxiii. 3, lxxv. 4; Jer. xlix. 4; and the other, בָּרַח (Berech), which means "to boast," though its primary meaning is "to bless"—to bless one's-self in his heart, as in Deut. xxix. 19, where it signifies "boasting in his heart." The word בָּצַע (Botzea), which is so often rendered "covetous," means actually a robber, who avails himself of others' property in an unrighteous manner; the original meaning of the word, when a verb, is "to cut," "to break,"—when a noun, applied to money, it means, "money which was cut or broken from another's pocket," *i.e.* by extortion in any way. So in Prov. i. 19. "So are the ways of every בָּצַע בָּצַע (Botzea Betza) robber, who robbeth by extortion, and taketh away the life of the owner thereof;" *i.e.* in case of resistance. Here we see that it means a robber, and not, as it is erroneously rendered, "greedy of gain," for, surely a merely greedy man will not commit murder. These two words have the same meaning in Hab. ii. 9, and in many other places. The verse before us, speaking of Doeg, who accused the poor

priests, and got his soul's desire in having procured their utter destruction, and, no doubt, availed himself of their property, says, "For the wicked waxeth proud in getting his soul's desire, and the robber doth boast in provoking Jehovah," see Zech. xi. 5, from which the Hebrew scholar will perceive that the phrase **וְבִצֵּעַ בִּרְדָּה נֶאֱמָץ יְהוָה** (Uvotzea Berech Nietz Jehovah) in our verse may also be rendered, "and the robber blesseth Jehovah whom he provoketh;" and this may refer with great propriety to the wicked Doeg, whom David met in Nob when pretending to worship. 1 Sam. xxi. 7.

4. The wicked, in the swelling of his wrath, careth for nothing ;
There is no God, is the whole of his devices.
5. His ways are violent at all times ;
Thy judgments are beyond his notice ; he puffeth at all his
opponents.
6. He saith in his heart, I shall never slip ;
In every round of events I shall succeed without trouble.

The primary meaning of **דָּוָר** (Dor) is to "go round," "turn about," like some round thing, or even "a round thing." Hence it denotes figuratively, "a generation of men;" for this continually turns round, one generation departing from this stage of life, and another coming. Thus it signifies "a turn," or "a round of events." In our passage it cannot mean "generation," for how can a man be sure to prosper in another generation when he is once dead? It must therefore mean "the turn of events." The word **אָשֶׁר** (Asher) is a verb, and means "prosper," and must read as if it had been **לְדוֹר וָדוֹר אָשֶׁר בְּלֹא רָע** (Ledor Vador Aasher Belo Ra), which signifies "in every turn, or round of events, I shall prosper or succeed without trouble," i.e. I do not care for any change of circumstances; I shall always make out my way and will; I shall succeed easily without trouble.

7. His mouth is full of perjury, of deceit, and fraud ;
Under his tongue are mischief and iniquity.
8. He lieth in ambush in concealed courts ;
In secret places he murdereth the innocent ; his eyes watch for
the defenceless.
9. He lurketh in secret as a lion in his den ;
He lurketh to catch the poor ; he seizeth the poor, drawing
him into his net.
10. He croucheth, he bendeth downwards,
That by his mighty efforts the defenceless are fallen.

In verses 8, 9, and 10 a graphic description is given of the repeated and strong efforts of the wicked for the destruction of the poor and helpless, who fall his victims. Verse 8. "He lies or places himself **בְּמִאָּרָב חֲצֵרִים** (Be-maarav Chatzerim) in ambush in concealed courts, or in the concealed places of the courts, i.e. under the walls of the house courts, where he should

not be seen . . . "his eyes יַעֲפֹנָה לְחֶלְכָּה (Lechelcha Yitzponu) "watch for the defenceless." The word לְחֶלְכָּה (Chelcha) is of a very peculiar construction, and appears only in this Psalm. It is composed of two different roots, חֵל (Chel) strength, or vigour, and כָּהָה (Kehah) depressed, languid, or downcast; hence the compound implies helpless, or defenceless; one that hath no power to resist. Verse 10 describes the activity of the wicked, who, when he has prepared his net, withdraws into his lurking place again, whence he constantly looks out through the holes of the walls under which he lies, keeping the strings of the net in his hand, ready to draw them whenever the unhappy victim puts his foot upon the net. "He croucheth, he leaneth (his body) downwards," *i.e.* looking out if all be ready; "and בַּעֲצֻמָּיו (Baatzumav) by his mighty or strong efforts the defenceless is fallen." The Psalmist then proceeds in verse 11 to describe the fearlessness of the murderer after the crime has been perpetrated, and how he thinks that God will never punish him.

11. He saith in his heart, The Lord hath forgotten :
He hideth his face ; he will never notice it.
12. Arise, O Jehovah, lift up thine hands ;
O God, forget thou not the afflicted.
13. Why should the wicked contemn God, saying in his heart,
Thou wilt not inquire ?
14. Surely, Thou hast seen ; for thou beholdest mischief and pro-
vocation,
Even to requite it with thine hand ;
To thee the defenceless committeth himself :
Of the fatherless thou hast been the Defender.
15. Break thou the power of the wicked and violent man ;
That when thou searchest for his wickedness thou find none.

It may be worthy of notice, that when the wicked is spoken of (in verse 4) as if yet hatching the idea of committing murder, he is represented as one whose thoughts and devices are that there is no God. But when the deed is once perpetrated, and conscience begins to awaken, he is spoken of (see verse 11) as taking the false refuge of Cain, and thinking God hath forgotten it, and will never inquire or search into the crime to punish it. This is quite natural; for if the wicked would remember, before he commits the murder, that there is a God, it would never be committed. So it is equally natural that, when the murder has been perpetrated, and the wretch's conscience begins to torment him, he can scarcely think then that there is no God; but he impiously takes the false refuge, and imagines that God has nothing to do with these things, and will never see nor interfere with him. David therefore calls upon the Lord for speedy judgment. "Arise, O Jehovah, lift up thine hands, O God," *i.e.* exert thy power, and exercise thy authority; "forget thou not the afflicted," *i.e.* let it not seem so as if thou didst forget them. Verse 13. "Why should the wicked contemn God?" The word נִאָץ (Nietz), which we render here "contemn," we have rendered "provoke" in verse 3. But it has both meanings; for instance,

in 2 Sam. xii. 14, נִיֵּץ נִיֵּאֲצָטָא (Nietz Niatzta), "provoking, thou hast provoked the enemies of God," *i.e.* stimulated them, and given them reason to blaspheme. But in Jer. xxiii. 17, and 1 Sam. ii. 17, and in many other places, it must be understood to mean "contemned," or "despised." In this Psalm we have taken both significations merely to suit the subject. "Why should the wicked contemn God?" *i.e.* "Why should he contemn thee, O God, saying in his heart, Thou wilt not inquire?" David then proceeds to show that God does inquire—that God does behold injustice, and robbery, and murder, mischief, and provocation, even for the very purpose of punishing it. In the second clause of this verse, special reference is made to the wonderful escape and deliverance of the fatherless Abiathar, the only surviving son of the priest of Nob. 1 Sam. xxii. 20—23. "To thee the defenceless committeth himself; of the fatherless thou hast been the Defender," or this fatherless thou hast rescued. In verse 15, David prays the Lord that not only He should punish the wicked for crimes already committed, but also so to break his power—so to unfit him for doing any more mischief to the innocent, that even, when His all-surveying eye should make search for wickedness, He might find none. Thus the innocent would no more be exposed to danger of life, and the wicked would no more be able to commit murder and blaspheme. (Compare Ps. civ. 35.)

16. Jehovah shall be King world without end :
The heathen shall disappear from his land ;
17. When thou, O Jehovah, hast heard the desire of the meek,
To prepare their heart, and incline thine ear :
18. To advocate the cause of orphans and oppressed,
That man may no more be hurried from the earth.

The last three verses of this Psalm contain an excellent prayer for the conversion of the whole world—for the exertion of the almighty influences of God in preparing men's hearts for it, and consequently for making an end of wickedness and sin, and for establishing judgment, righteousness, and peace. Verse 16. "Jehovah shall be King, עוֹלָם וָעֶד (Olam vaed), world without end; the heathen shall disappear from his land," *i.e.* by their being converted to the true God. But when shall this be? "When thou, O Jehovah, hast heard the desire of the meek," *i.e.* the prayer of thy children for the conversion of the world, "to prepare their heart," the heart of the heathen, "and to incline thine ear," *i.e.* to hear them when they call on thee for pardon. And what will be the consequences? The cause of the orphan and of the oppressed will be righteously advocated—justice and equity will rule the world, and man will no more be hurried by violence from the earth—Jehovah shall be praised, and men shall live and die in peace.

PS. XI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXII.

(Lamnatzeach), "To the Chief Cause of all Events."

(See end of Introduction.)

A PSALM OF DAVID.

1. In Jehovah is my refuge; how dare ye say regarding my soul,
Flee to your mountain, O ye sparrows?

"Flee, O ye sparrows, to your mountain." This was used proverbially for a persecuted individual who was supposed to have no hope of escape but in exile in distant lands. The proverb means this: If you sparrows do not wish to fall into the hands of the fowler, be quick and remove to your mountain where he cannot reach you. This David's enemies now applied to him, intimating that unless he left the bounds of his fatherland he would be sure to become their prey; but he tells them that there is One who is higher and stronger than the loftiest mountains; and in whom he has taken refuge, and therefore he does not fear. The word צִפּוֹר (Tzipor) here stands to signify the species, and therefore it is in the singular, as it is likewise in Ps. viii. 8, and other places.

2. Though indeed the wicked have bent the bow,
They have fitted the arrow to the string,
To shoot in the dark the upright in heart.
3. But when the boundaries are demolished,
What hath the righteous achieved?

"What hath the righteous achieved?" *i.e.*, by his flight. The argument is this: David's enemies threatened to kill him if he remained in his own country. But having already experienced that equal danger followed him even beyond the boundaries of Judea, when he fled to Gath in Philistia, he now resolved to take refuge in Jehovah alone, and to remain in Judea in spite of the threatenings of his enemies. Therefore he says in verse 2, "Though indeed the wicked have bent the bow, they have fitted the arrow to the string, to shoot in the dark the upright in heart;" though they are all prepared with their weapons to take my life, still I will abandon the country no more, for death threatens me over the boundary as well as here. "But, when the boundaries are demolished, what has the righteous achieved?" *i.e.*, what have I gained by fleeing to Philistia? Did not the same, yea, and greater danger overtake me there? I must therefore take my refuge in Jehovah alone, and remain where I am. The word שְׁתוֹת (Shathoth) means "boundaries." Its primary signification is "banks," or ridges of earth, heaped on to prevent the water of a reservoir from escaping. Thus Isaiah (xix. 10), when speaking of the disappointments of the Egyptian fishermen, says, וְהָיוּ שְׁתֵּיתֶיהָ מְדֻכָּאִים (Vehayu Shathotheha Medukaim), "and her trenchmen shall be downcast, even all those that make sluices and ponds for fish." The word שְׁתוֹת (Shathoth) is erroneously rendered in Isaiah by "purposes," and in our Psalm by "foundation," for it had never any of these meanings. Here the figure is grand; the wrath of David's enemies is the water of the pools, it is surrounded by banks or boundaries, but when the boundaries are removed the water runs out furiously in every direction; so here, the wrath and fury of David's enemies knew no boundaries, but ran and pursued him everywhere. He therefore saw that he must give up every thought of leaving the country any more. His refuge now is Jehovah, and Jehovah alone, whose faithfulness he describes in the succeeding part of the Psalm.

4. Jehovah in his holy temple—Jehovah, whose throne is in heaven;
His eyes behold; his eyelids try the children of men.

5. Jehovah discerns the righteous;
But the wicked, and the lover of violence, his soul abhorreth.
6. He shall cause burning coals, fire, and sulphur to rain upon the wicked,
And a scorching blast shall be the portion of their cup.
7. For the righteous Jehovah loveth righteousness;
The upright shall behold his face.

Verse 4: "Jehovah in his holy temple—Jehovah, whose throne is in heaven," *i.e.*, the same Jehovah whom I have made my refuge (verse 1), "his eyes behold" all the proceedings of the human family; "his eyelids try the children of man." This being the case, it is certain that "Jehovah discerns the righteous, but the wicked and the lover of violence his soul abhorreth." In verse 6, the judgment of the wicked and their final destruction are described in figurative language borrowed from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. "He shall cause" (פָּחִים) (Pachim), "burning coals," or "burning balls of fire." The word comes from פָּחַם (Pechom), and not from פָּח (Pach), as some suppose; for the figure of "snares" will not do here, seeing the whole stands as a figure taken from the dreadful destruction of Sodom, and this would be a figure within a figure, different in their nature, which we never find. The רוּחַ זִלְעָפוֹת (Ruach Zilaphoth) signifies the terrible burning and scorching blast which must accompany such a rain of fire and sulphur; and all this is "the portion of the wicked's cup." The Psalmist concludes with one reason for both the fearful destruction of the wicked and for his own confidence in Jehovah's aid and deliverance; "For the righteous Jehovah loveth righteousness; the upright shall behold his face," *i.e.*, experience his goodness and mercy, in time and in eternity. Having such a refuge, David needs not leave the country and flee for his life.

PS. XII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXIII.

"Lamnatzeach," Dedicatory Title, "To the Chief Cause of all Events."

עַל־שְׁמִינִית (Al Hashminith), To be performed by a third division of the Musicians, which consisted of eight small wards or bands. The whole of the musical Levites were divided into three head bands under the three leaders, Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun. Each of these head bands was again divided into eight smaller ones. And so "Al Hashminith," which means upon the eighth, just intimates that the Psalm was to be sung by a third division of eight small bands.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

1. Sarc, O Jehovah, for pious men have entirely ceased—
For the faithful ones fail from among the children of men.

חָסִיד (Chasid) in this verse stands to denote the whole community of

pious men, as is often the case with such nouns in the Hebrew. Indeed, even if we would read it in the singular, the same thing will be understood. "Save, O Jehovah, for the pious man has entirely ceased," *i.e.*, he is scarcely to be found in any community—he ceased to exist in this generation. Both verbs גָּמַר (Gamar) "ceased," and פָּסַח (Passu) "failed," must refer to things which formerly existed, but which had now ceased and failed to exist. There were pious and godly men in Israel in former times, and had it pleased the Lord to speak with David about the matter, he probably would have told him his mistake, as he told Elijah his when he thought that he was left alone—that he was the only faithful servant of God left in Israel. But David, looking with the eyes of man, and beholding the general corruption and degeneracy of his nation, exclaimed in the anguish of his soul, "Save, O Jehovah, for pious men have entirely ceased," &c. He then proceeds to describe the awful wickedness that prevailed in society in those days, and which gave him reason for the complaint in verse 1st.

2. They talk falsehood one with another;
The smoothest language they speak with a double heart.

שֵׁפֶת חֲלָקוֹת (Sepath Chalakoth) "the smoothest or the most flattering language" (the word "sephath" is here in the singular, and cannot, therefore, mean "lips," but rather the "language" uttered with the lips.) בִּלְבָב וּלְבָב יְדַבְּרוּ (Belev Valev Yedaberu), "they speak with a double heart," *i.e.*, even when they speak to you in a most friendly manner, as if the words came from a heart full of love, still you cannot believe them, for the fulness of their heart is wickedness, and hatred, and malice, and the mere profession of their lips is falsehood. The Hebrew terms here (Lev Valev, which signify a double heart) will be better understood when compared with Deut. xxv. 13, where the merchant is warned not to have in his bag אֶבֶן וְאֶבֶן (Even Vaeven), literally "a stone and a stone," which is explained in the same verse to mean that he should not have divers weights, "a great and a small," *i.e.*, when he makes the bargain about the price, he should not show the larger stone to the customer, and then deceive him by putting the smaller stone into the balance. Thus the wicked are described as being double hearted—they are possessed, as it were, of two different hearts; from the smooth and flattering words which they employ when wishing to ensnare you and to gain their wicked design, you would think that a heart full of love and compassion moves within them, but their actions soon discover that their heart is wicked, full of hatred, and malice, and falsehood. This is the meaning, this the abominable character of "a double heart." (Compare the parallel passage, 1 Chron. xii. 33.)

3. Jehovah shall cut off all flattering lips—
The tongue also that speaketh arrogantly.
4. Those also who say, By our tongue we must prevail;
Our lips are with us: who is Lord over us?
5. Because of the devastation of the poor—

Because of the groaning of the needy,
Now will I arise, saith Jehovah ;
I will make him breathe the air of salvation.

The *poor and needy* is persecuted by the wicked—he is sighing and groaning under the burden of affliction ; the word **אֲנָקָה** (Enkath) signifies that silent but strong groaning or moaning of a sufferer who is nearly suffocated, either by foul air, or, figuratively, by dreadful oppression ; Jehovah seeth it and saith, “ Because of the devastation of the poor—because of the groaning of the needy, now will I arise” **אֲשִׁית** (Ashith), “ I will make” **בְּיֵשָׁע** (Beyesha) “ in, through, or by salvation,” **יָפִיחַ לוֹ** (Yaphiach Lo), “ a breathing for him,” or when combined, it means, “ I will procure a breathing for him in my salvation, or by my salvation,” i.e. “ I will not leave him to be suffocated in the midst of oppression—I will deliver him—bring him forth into a place of security and peace—I will make him breathe the air of salvation.” The meaning of this clause is so pure, so plain, and so sublime, that we think it needless to enlarge. The least acquaintance with the Hebrew is sufficient to comprehend and appreciate the meaning of every one of these words separately, and to see their force when combined. (That **יֵשָׁע** [Yesha] means salvation, see Habak. iii. 13.)

6. The promises of Jehovah are pure promises :
They are like refined silver, which is purified seven times,
After its being interwoven with the earth.

“ The promises of Jehovah,” i.e. to bring salvation unto the groaning poor and needy (as it is in verse 5) “ are pure promises,” i.e. not a *dark speech*, not an *allegory*, but they are “ like refined silver,” which, though naturally intermixed or interwoven with the earth, yet becomes pure and brilliant when purified seven times ; in like manner, Jehovah’s promises, though they seem often obscure to the suffering child of God, who cannot see their fulfilment while he is still in deep distress, nevertheless they will soon become pure and brilliant when they receive their fulfilment, which they must receive at last. The word **בַּעֲלִיל** (Baalil) comes from **עָלִילָה** (Alilah), which primarily signifies “ a thing worked out cunningly.” It is applied either to a cunning work of any kind carefully accomplished to the last, as in Lev. xix. 10, and Deut. xxiv. 21, regarding the perfect gleaning of a field or garden ; or as in 1 Sam. ii. 3, and Ps. xxviii. 4, to performances, whether good or evil. It is also applied to the wonder-works of God, as in Ps. lxxvii. 11, lxxviii. 7. It is used metaphorically to denote “ a cunningly invented story,” which is styled **עֲלִילַת דְּבָרִים** (Alilath Devarim), Deut. xxii. 14. In our passage it denotes “ a thing which is cunningly intermixed” with the earth, as silver is surely interwoven most wonderfully with the **אָרֶץ** (Aretz) earth. There is a parallel passage in Job. xvi. 15, “ I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, **וְעָלִיתִי בַּעֲפָר קֶרְנִי** (Veol-

lalti Beaphar Karni), and interred or intermixed my glory with the dust."

7. Thou, O Jehovah, shalt preserve them ;
Thou shalt guard them continually against this generation."

This refers also to the *poor and needy* (of verse 5), to whom Jehovah has given the promise of his protection against the wicked oppressors. David here shows the infallibility of Jehovah's promises—that he, according to his promise, shall guard them against that wicked generation. לעולם (Leolan) in this verse stands to signify, "continually" and not "for ever." David then concludes by showing the danger to which the poor are exposed, and the consequent need which they have of the promised guardian care of the Almighty Jehovah.

8. The wicked walk round about the children of men,
Like the rupture of overflowing streams.

The meaning of this verse is, that the wicked surround the children of men on every side like the rupture of overflowing streams, which surround and carry off, before any human help can be afforded. The words כָּרַם וְזָלוּת (Kerum Zuluth) have been misunderstood by all commentators, both Jewish and Christian. כָּרַם (Rom), among its other significations, means also, "to lift up," or "carry off," or "take away." Lev. iv. 8—10; Num. xvii. 2; Ezek. xxi. 26, xlv. 9; Dan. viii. 11. The word זָלוּ (Zal) means, "a running furiously in different directions," "to let something run with profusion in an irregular way." Isa. xlv. 6. "To let loose the money from the purse"—to scatter it profusely. Jerem. ii. 36. "Why dost thou hurry, or run so hurriedly?" &c. Hence is formed נִזְלִים (Nozlim), signifying "hurrying streams." Psalm lxxviii. 16; Isa. xlv. 3; Exod. xv. 8. So כָּרַם וְזָלוּת (Kerum Zuluth), like the eruption of a swollen overflowing stream, which surrounds and carries every thing before it, the wicked encircle the children of men, to carry them suddenly away.

PS. XIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXIV.

(Lamnatzeach) "To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A SONG, OR PSALM OF DAVID.

1. How long, O Jehovah, wilt thou continue to neglect me ?
How long wilt thou hide thy face from me ?
2. How long shall I contrive plans in my soul ?

- How long shall grief dwell in my heart daily ?
 How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me ?
3. Look down—answer me, O Jehovah, my God :
 Give light to mine eyes, lest I fall asleep by death :
 4. Lest mine enemy say, I have overpowered him—
 Lest mine adversary exult, should I slip.
 5. But I have put my trust in thy abundant mercy :
 My heart shall exult in thy salvation.
 6. I will chaunt unto Jehovah—
 When he has recompensed unto me.

Verse 1st, "Continue to neglect me." The word נֶחֱחַ (Netzach), signifies the uninterrupted continuance of a thing, as in Jer. viii. 5, "A continual backsliding;" xv. 18, "Why is thus my pain continually," *i.e.* uninterrupted; Amos i. 11, "and he kept his wrath continually." Hence it is often used to denote "for ever," because eternity continues without interruption; but we must surely restore it to its radical meaning, where it is obviously necessary; for David here could not have said that the Lord doth neglect him "for ever;" but as he saw no way of deliverance, he said, "How long, O Jehovah, wilt thou continue to neglect me?" It is the same with the word שָׁכַח (Shachach), which does not always signify "to forget," but sometimes also "to neglect," as in Gen. xl. 23, it may be said, "the chief butler neglected Joseph." In Lam. ii. 6, it must mean "neglect:" "The Lord caused the feasts and the Sabbath days to be neglected in Zion." The same meaning it must be allowed to have in Psalm cxxxvii., "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, my right hand, or my vigour, shall be neglected," *i.e.* shall fail me; and the same in Ps. cii. 4, "for I neglected to eat my bread." David looked out continually for deliverance, but the darkness increased instead of being brightened and cleared away by any tokens of Divine favour and speedy help; therefore he says, "How long, O Jehovah, wilt thou continue to neglect me? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?" Verse 2. "How long shall I contrive plans in my soul?" *i.e.* how long will I be in that miserable state of constant danger, so as to be obliged to contrive plans in my soul continually how I may escape? Such a state is indeed most torturing, and as such David felt it. No other subject could enter his mind while his life was in such immediate danger. The "how long" must also be applied to the second clause, "How long shall grief be in my heart daily? How long shall mine enemy be exalted, or lifted up, over me?" *i.e.* How long shall I continue to be inferior to him, so that I should tremble daily because of his great power? David's prayer in verses 3 and 4 is entirely founded upon the expressions used in the questions in verses 1 and 2. *There* he asks how long the Lord would continue to neglect him, and to hide his face from him; *here* he prays, that Jehovah would look down and answer him. *There* he complains of the darkness about him, of the obscurity concerning his deliverance—for which reason he was made to continue at contriving plans in his soul, and to be grieved in his heart; *here* he prays for light—"Give light to mine eyes," which means plainly, "Show me thy salvation—make me see deliverance, lest I fall asleep by death, or with death;" *i.e.* lest I sleep the eternal sleep, to awake no more.—*There* he said, "How long

shall mine enemy be exalted over me?" and *here* he prays (verse 4) that the joy might never be afforded to his enemies, to see him overwhelmed and fallen. The particle פֶּן (Pen) at the beginning of verse 4, must also be inserted at the beginning of the second clause of the verse: "Lest mine enemy say, I have overmatched him—lest mine adversaries exult—should I slip, or when I slip." The son of Jesse had indeed experienced many hours of mental darkness and obscurity, but as soon as he had recourse to prayer, light broke suddenly in upon him—he had many hours of trouble and affliction, calamities and trials, doubts and weakness, but as soon as he came to wrestle with Jehovah in ardent supplication, comfort and consolation were poured upon him, the spirit of joy and gladness revived within him, and the weak became strong. Whilst praying the Lord for deliverance, he remembered the certainty of its coming,—the faithfulness of that God in whom he had all reason to trust, and therefore he exclaims: "But I have put my trust in thine abundant mercy (so חֶסֶד [Chessed] signifies 'abundant mercy,' or 'overflowing goodness'); my heart shall exult in thy salvation; I will chaunt unto Jehovah when he has recompensed unto me," *i.e.* when he has recompensed mine unshaken faith and entire confidence. The word גָּמַל (Gamal) means, "recompence," "retribution," "reward," "requital." It cannot be properly rendered by "dealing bountifully." The Lord says regarding his faithful, "Because he loved me, or set his affection on me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, or exalt him, because he regarded my name." Ps. xci. 14. Here is the compensation of the believer, "I said not unto the seed of Judah, Seek ye my face in vain."

The 14th Psalm, which in the common arrangement immediately succeeds the four last inserted, belongs to the same period; and the more we consider it, the stronger is our conviction that it forms, as it were, an appendix to these. It is descriptive of a gloomy period, when wickedness overspread the nation of Israel—when evil-doers prevailed—when God was neither feared nor called upon—when the poor and needy were devoured like bread by ravenous murderers, and when this fearful state of things could not be put a stop to, except by a complete revolution in the tyrannical and wicked government under which such deeds were perpetrated. To what period in the whole history of David's life could the lamentable description contained in this Psalm refer, if not to that in question? Under what government but Saul's had such crimes been committed? When else was so much innocent blood shed, as on the occasion of the slaughter of the priests of God, and of all the inhabitants of their city? And what other means could be devised for the restoration of order and peace than the removal of Saul the Benjamite, the man of blood, and the giving of the kingdom to Judah, to whom it was promised by God by the mouth of the dying patriarch Jacob? Genes. xlix. 8—10. This is the import of the Psalm. David describes the infidelity and rage of the wicked—how they devour the poor, and shed innocent blood—and how general the corruption was; and then he closes with a prayer, that the Lord might hasten the time when the deliverance of Israel should come from Zion, which means, when the Lord should give the kingdom to him (as will be shown in the exposition.) Then would Jacob rejoice, and Israel be glad.

Before entering on the Psalm, we must remark, that it appears twice in the Book of Psalms—the 53d being only a transcript of the 14th, which is the original. The latter was composed at the very time of the distress and disorder it records, and the former was afterwards modified and arranged for the Temple service; and hence the slight alteration in the body of the poem, as well as in the title. But these things will be noticed in their proper places, as we shall give the literal translation, and a careful exposition of both, beginning with the 14th. The position which they respectively occupy in the present arrangement, viz. the one immediately succeeding the four Psalms which refer to the slaughter of the priests; the other, after Psalm lii., which speaks of the murderous Doeg, affords the strongest external proof that the one now to be entered upon was written at that period. But internal evidence must settle the question.

PS. XIV. CHRONOLOGICALLY XXV.

"Lamnatzeach," dedicated "To the Chief Cause of all Events."

(See end of Introduction.)

A PSALM OF DAVID.

1. The profligate determined in his heart, There is no God :
Hence their destructive—their abominable crimes—
Hence there is none that doeth what is right.

David speaks here of a class of men as distinct from mere "fools" (as "Naval" is rendered in the version), as heaven is distinct from earth. He speaks of the vilest of men, with whom determined Atheism is the source of all kinds of mischief and wickedness—cruelty, robbery, murder, and the most abominable crimes. Therefore, to call such characters "fools," is to give them a wrong name. Would a British jury consider them as such? Would they let them loose on the community again by bringing in a verdict, that they were only mere "fools?" The question is, Will the word נָבֵל (Naval) permit the use of a stronger term than "fool?" We answer, that it never signifies "fool," and that it allows of a term which should be expressive of the "vilest and most abominable wretch, an outcast from God and man." The primary meaning of "Naval" is, "to fall off, down, or away;" also, "to wear off, or, waste away;" also, "to be cast off, rejected, contemned," or, "to be esteemed vile, unclean, abominable." See the different significations of this comprehensive word in Exod. xviii. 18, where it means "waste away" by reason of hard labour; in Isa. xxxiv. 4, xl. 7, where it means, "waste" in time. But in Deut. xxxii. 15, it signifies "blaspheme," or "reject;" and so in Jerem. xiv. 21, "Do not reject, or abominate" (Jerusalem); Mic. vii. 6, "The son contemns the father;" Nahum iii. 6, "And I will cast upon thee abominable filth, and make thee an abhorrence." In the feminine, נְבִילָה (Nevelah) signifies, "a dead carcase;" but נְבִילָה (Nevalah), "a vile action," "an abominable crime;" Gen. xxxiv. 7 (in which it is falsely rendered "folly"); Josh. vii. 15, "Be-

cause he hath committed an horrible crime." In Judges xx. 6, though it is translated "folly," it stands to express at once the double crime of adultery and murder—"profligacy," abominable crimes of adultery and murder. So in 2 Sam. xiii. 12, it means "profligacy;" and in ver. 13, "And thou shalt be as one of the 'profligates' in Israel." We have thus endeavoured to show how far this word has been perverted from its real meaning, for it never signifies either "fool," or "folly," but, an "abandoned profligate," a "designing, murderous infidel." The words for "fool" are כְּסִיל (Kesil), פֶּתִי (Pethi), בָּעַר (Baar); and for "folly," כֶּסֶל (Kesel), אִוְלֵת, &c., (Iveleth, &c.)

David not only describes the general degeneracy of the period, the dreadful crimes which were openly perpetrated; but he traces the source of all these evils to Atheism. "The profligate determined, or concluded, in his heart, There is no God. Hence their destructive, their abominable crimes; or, Hence they are destructive; or even, Hence they commit destructive and abominable crimes." אָמַר (Amar) does not always mean "speak" (nor indeed is there any such thing as speaking in the heart), but sometimes, and especially when it is along with "heart," it signifies "determine," or "decide;" as in Exod. ii. 14, "Art thou determined to slay me?" and in 2 Sam. xxi. 16, "And he was determined to slay David." That עֲלִילָה (Allilah) here signifies "vile crimes," see parallel passage in Psalm liii. Thus David concludes that Atheism was the root of all the corruption and abomination which at that time existed. "Hence," says he, "there is none that doeth what is right;" hence is the corruption so general.

2. Jehovah looked down from heaven upon the sons of men,
To see whether there be a serious thinker, searching after God:
3. They have all apostatized; the whole community hath become one corruption:
None doeth what is right, no, not even one.

The omniscient God is here represented as looking down from heaven upon that awfully corrupt race—and for what purpose? To over-see them—to examine thoroughly that he may discover whether there be מְשַׁכִּיל (Maskil) "a serious thinker," or "one seriously and earnestly considering the awful state of affairs;" and then, whether that (Maskil) serious man be דּוֹרֵשׁ אֱלֹהִים (Doresh Eth Elohim) "searching the Elohim." This expression is used in Old Testament Scripture to denote either the Israelites' visits to the tabernacle where the ark of the covenant stood, and which was called "Elohim," because of the Shechinah that dwelt between the Cherubim; or, their going to a prophet of God to search for God, or to enquire of God, when they waited for an answer. This inquiring of the prophet was so called, because it was by means of it that they generally received the instruction of God—the enquiring of the oracle through the High Priest being only resorted to on extraordinary occasions. (1 Sam. ix. 9, 12, 17, 19—22, 25. Samuel was with the tabernacle and oracle, and therefore it was called "searching God" by him.) In that fearfully cor-

rupt period there was none calling upon, or searching after God—there was none caring for tabernacle, or oracle, or priests, for the very existence of God was denied. Hence the indifference to the slaughter of the priests and their families—to the destruction of the city in which the tabernacle stood—and to the consequent entire overthrow of the priestly and Levitical system, and the service of God.

In verses 2 and 3, Jehovah is represented as surveying the state of matters, and finding it awfully corrupt, so in the three following verses He is represented as threatening the wicked murderers, and telling them their doom.

4. O be it known unto the workers of iniquity,
That the devourers of my people shall be consumed in battle;
Because they have not called upon Jehovah.

The word לַחֶם (Lachem), which is here rendered “bread,” (the misinterpretation obscures the whole Psalm), means also, “battle,” or “hot war,” and is so translated in Judg. v. 8, “Then was war in the gates;” and also in Psalm xxxv. 1, “Fight against them that fight against me;” and still farther it is the same in Psalm lvi. 1, 2. In the verse before us its signification is also the same, “war,” or “battle.” “O be it known unto the workers of iniquity,” or, will it not be made known unto them? “that the devourers of my people shall,” or will, or must, “be consumed in battle,” because they did not call upon the Lord. This was not only a denunciation against Saul and his murderous associates, but it was a prophecy besides. He was devoured in battle, because he devoured God’s people the priests, and because he did not call on the Lord. When surrounded by calamity and distress he began to call upon him, but, alas! it was too late. He had then miserable recourse to the witch at Endor, and there his approaching doom was foreshown to him by the prophet Samuel. 1 Sam. xxviii. 5—21. But the prophecy goes on farther.

5. There shall they tremble with terror,
For God is in the circle of the righteous.

“There,” viz. in the place of their judgment, in the midst of the war which was to consume them, “There shall they tremble with terror.” Accordingly, we are informed in 1 Sam. xxviii. 5, that when the fatal war with the Philistines broke out, and when Saul saw the mighty host of the enemy, “he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.” He then began to seek that God whose being he had denied, and whose priests he had devoured, but it was too late. When Samuel (appearing in a wonderful manner) told him his doom, as before referred to, “then he fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel,” ver. 20. And when the battle went sore against him, and he saw that God was a God of vengeance, his terror and despair became so great that he took away his own life. 1 Sam. xxxi. 3, 4. Thus was this prophecy literally fulfilled. There the wicked trembled with fear; and when they saw David and his men standing in the Philistian army (they were dismissed by Achish before the battle began), they would doubtless be forced to conclude not only that there is a God, but that he was then “in the

circle, (דֹר [Dor], in this place does not signify "generation," but "circle," "community"—(see its meaning in Isa. xxii. 18, xxix. 3) of the righteous"—that he had forsaken them, and was with David. So Samuel said to Saul, "Wherefore then dost thou enquire of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee and is become thine enemy? . . . The Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and hath given it to thy neighbour, even to David." 1 Sam. xxviii. 16, 17. Having shown the wicked that they will be taught by dire experience that there is a God, and that he will bring upon them terror and destruction, while he is to be found graciously in the circle of the righteous, the Psalmist adds—

6. The counsels of the afflicted shall put you to shame,
Because Jehovah is his refuge.

The word עֲצָת (Atzath) means not only "counsels," but also "devices," "designs," "contrivances," and here it refers to the persecuted and afflicted Psalmist himself. His devices and contrivances during his trials under Saul were wonderful. How often was he near death! How often was he almost within the grasp of his blood-thirsty enemies! But his contrivances always put them to shame; and how? "Because Jehovah was his refuge." He made him always succeed in his contrivances for his deliverance.—The last verse contains a prayer of David, that the Lord would hasten the time when Israel should be freed from their wicked and cruel government, and the kingdom be given to him, who was of the tribe to which it belonged, according to the promise of God.

7. O may soon the salvation of Israel come from Zion;
When Jehovah shall redress the affliction of his people:
Then shall Jacob exult, and Israel rejoice.

From the nature of Israel's arrangements, having been divided originally into twelve tribes, and each tribe having had its own distinct territory assigned to it, it followed, that from whichever tribe the monarch was chosen, he fixed his residence in the territory of his own tribe, where his influence and safety would naturally be greatest. Such was the case accordingly both with the judges and the kings. Saul was a Benjamite, and therefore he resided in Gibeah, which was in the territory of his tribe. Jeroboam was an Ephraimite, and therefore he dwelt in Ephraim's territory. What, then, was more natural than that David should speak, as in this verse he does, regarding the kingdom which was promised to him by God through the prophet Samuel? It has been already shown, that while Benjamin's part of northern Jerusalem remained in the hand of the Jebusites till the days of David, Judah had possession of his southern part of it even from the time of the Judges. (See Judg. i. 8, 21, also explanation of it in this book, page 70.) Mount Zion, which lay between the two, belonged on the south side to Judah, while the north side of it, and Mount Moriah, pertained to Benjamin. Till the time of David both of these mountains were held by the Jebusites, who, by means of their strongly fortified castle, were able to defy all opposition. Israel must have looked eagerly forward to the time when this formidable enemy should be subdued, and themselves

obtain possession of the strongest natural fortification in all Palestine. That David had his eye fixed all along upon Zion as his place of residence when he should succeed to the throne, may be learned from the fact, that as soon as he was made king over all Israel, he marched against it with his forces, and made himself master of it. Even before he knew that it was to be the chosen place of Jehovah's temple; the great strength of its natural position, and its vicinity to Mount Moriah, on which Abraham was called to offer his son Isaac in sacrifice, besides its being in the territory of his tribe, might have induced him to select it as his residence. (From 1 Sam. x. 5, we learn that Israel always regarded Moriah with great veneration, and that it was called the "Hill of God;" for the Bethel mentioned in the 3d verse, referred to the very Mount Moriah, where the Jebusites must have allowed them to build an altar and offer sacrifices. Hence it was much visited by the sons of the prophets, for the tabernacle never stood at Bethel in the days of Samuel, but in Shiloh; and after the destruction of Shiloh, it was removed to Nob.)—But David might also have been led to make this selection from an impulse of the Spirit. When he says, "O may the salvation," or the deliverance, "of Israel," *i.e.* from their present miseries and calamities, "come from Zion;" he just means, "O that the Lord would hasten the promised time, when the government of wicked Saul will be overturned—when, instead of miseries and calamities coming forth upon Israel from Gibeah (Saul's residence), salvation and deliverance will come to them out of Zion," where he intended to establish his residence.—The literal signification of the expression מִי יִתֵּן (Mi Yiten), is, "O who will give?" but it is always used to mean, "O might it but soon come!"

It only remains now that we notice the words שׁוּב and שְׁבוּת (Shuv and Shevuth), which have been misinterpreted by being translated into, "bringing back the captivity." Here, as in various other places, they mean nothing more than to put again in order what was disordered, or, as we have rendered them, "to redress affliction." For example, in Job xlii. 10, they have been erroneously rendered, "And the Lord turned the captivity of Job." Now, who ever heard of "Job's captivity?" When was he ever led captive? The words should be rendered, "And the Lord redressed the affliction of Job." And in Jeremiah xxx. 18, the rendering should be the same, "I will restore, or re-order, the disordered tents of Jacob," for the tents were surely never led into captivity. In our Psalm, therefore, it means, When Jehovah should redress the afflictions of his people. Under Saul's wicked government they were in a convulsed and miserable state; but when their salvation would come from Zion, when David would be made king over them, order would be again restored, and their afflictions and calamities would be redressed. Then would Jacob exult, and Israel rejoice. Then would be sung that beautiful Psalm (cxxvi.), "When the Lord redressed the affliction of Zion (Zion was then the emblem of the Church) we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing," &c.

We come now to Psalm liii., which, as has been already stated, is to be considered as a transcript of the preceding. David having now succeeded to the throne, and redressed the miserable condition of Israel, re-composed

some of his former songs, enlarging and adapting them for the temple service. This accounts for the slight differences observable between the two Psalms, especially in their respective titles.

PS. LIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXVI.

“Lamnatzeach,” Dedicated “To the Chief Cause of all Events.”

(See end of Introduction.)

“A Maskil—A serious contemplation of David concerning the grievances.”

1. The profligate determined in his heart, There is no God :
Hence their destructive, their abominable crimes.
Hence there is none that doeth what is right.*
2. Jehovah looked down from heaven upon the sons of men,
To see whether there be a serious thinker, searching after God :
3. They are altogether become dross, the whole community is become one corruption :
None doeth what is right, no, not even one.

Here we have the first instance of alteration in the text. In the preceding or original Psalm, the 3d verse begins with the words הַכֹּל סָר (Hakol Sor), “They have all apostatized;” while here it reads כָּלֹ סָג (Kullo Sog), “They are altogether become dross.” The remainder of the verse in both is the same. The change may be thus accounted for : When the original was written, though they were indeed backsliders and apostates, still they might repent and turn to the Lord ; but now, it was known that they had died in their sin, and therefore he says that they had become dross altogether, by perishing in the corrupt state in which the Lord had seen them, when he looked down from heaven.

4. O be it known unto the workers of iniquity,
That the devourers of my people shall be consumed in battle ;
Because they have not called upon Jehovah.

Thus far the two Psalms are almost alike, but the succeeding verse has undergone considerable alteration. In the xiv. the Psalmist told the workers of iniquity that war would devour them ; and in the 5th verse he described the terror that would overwhelm them in the fatal battle. (See exposition of verses 4th and 5th.) But the liii. having been written after the fulfilment of this threatening, after the last engagement of Saul with the Philistines, and his destruction along with his wicked associates, instead

* For the exposition of such verses as are precisely alike in both Psalms, the reader is referred to the preceding one.

of the threatening being repeated in the following verse, the accomplishment of it is spoken of.

5. There they trembled with terror ;
 Was it not terrible when the Lord scattered the bones of thy
 trained army ?
 Thou wast put to confusion, because the Lord rejected them
 with contempt.

"There they trembled with terror," *i.e.*, Saul and his associates on Mount Gilboa. David then apostrophizes Saul, who perished in the midst of his wicked career : " Was it not terrible when the Lord scattered the bones of thy trained army ? " * Wast thou not overwhelmed with fear and trembling when thou didst see it, and, despairing, didst fall on thine own sword ? Wast thou not put to shame in the midst of thine army, because the Lord rejected them with contempt ? " Samuel said to Saul, the night before his end, " The Lord will deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines ; and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me (in death) ; the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines." 1 Sam. xxviii. 19. And so it happened, not only the bones of his *army*, but also *his own*, were scattered on that fearful day. The Philistines cut off his head, carrying it to the temples of their idols in triumph, and nailed his body to the wall of Bethshan, where it remained till the men of Jabesh-gilead took it down, and burned it with the bodies of his slain sons.

The Psalm concludes with the same prayer as the original.

6. O may soon the salvation of Israel come from Zion,
 When Jehovah shall redress the afflictions of his people ;
 Then shall Jacob exult, and Israel rejoice.

David's circumstances were now beginning to assume a somewhat more favourable aspect. As captain of a strong and numerous band, he moved about in the forest of Hareth, making occasional incursions into different neighbouring cities, whose inhabitants subsisted by plundering the coasts of Judah. Whilst thus engaged, he received information that Keilah, a city at no great distance, belonging to his tribe, had been attacked by the Philistines, and that they were pillaging the thrashing floors. David was strongly desirous to punish the invaders and rescue Keilah, but his men feared, saying " Behold, we be afraid here in Judah, how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines ? " But David had now the Oracle of the Urim and Thummim which Abiathar had brought along with him ; † and after twice inquiring of God whether he should go

* The Hebrew word חֵיָן (Chainoch) means " training," " to train," " to muster." See Prov. xxii. 6 ; חֵינִיכָיו (Chainichav) " his trained servants," trained troop of soldiers. Gen. xiv. 14. In our passage it is חֵיָךְ (Chonach), " thy trained troop or army."

† When we are told (1 Sam. xxiii. 6) that Abiathar fled to David to Keilah, we must understand by it, that it was near the time of David's going to Keilah ; for otherwise David would have had no oracle at which to inquire whether or not he should go thither.

against the enemy, and twice receiving a favourable answer, "he and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So he saved the inhabitants of Keilah." 1 Sam. xxiii. 1—6.

Keilah being a fenced city, David and his men remained in it for a time; but Saul having received notice of the fact, speedily assembled a great army for the purpose of besieging him there; for, said he, "God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars." David, however, was soon made aware of Saul's preparations, and he earnestly asked direction of God. He found that he must depart; for though the walls of the city were sufficiently strong to withstand Saul's attack, yet he was told by the Oracle that its ungrateful inhabitants would betray him into his hand. During David's sojourn in Keilah after his victory over the Philistines, his army increased to six hundred men. With these he now left that city, and having traversed the intervening mountainous district, came into the wilderness of Ziph.

He appears to have been much distressed at the ungrateful behaviour and contemplated treachery of the inhabitants of Keilah; but he was greatly encouraged by the Lord's watchful care over him, and his condescending goodness in answering him by the Oracle. It was accordingly on this occasion that he composed Psalm xxxi. It divides originally into three parts. The First contains the warm expressions of his gratitude to God, and his strong confidence that he would still continue his loving-kindness to him; verses 1—8. The Second consists of an ardent prayer and supplication for deliverance from the persecution and dangers which still threatened him; 9—18. And the Third, of cheerful thanksgivings to Jehovah for having delivered him and his men from the danger they were in at Keilah; and an exhortation to them to be of good courage, and to put their confidence in God; 19—24.

PS. XXXI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXVII.

PART FIRST.

"Lamnatzeach," dedicated "To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A SONG OF DAVID.

1. In thee, O Jehovah, have I made my refuge; I shall never be ashamed:
In thy righteousness, do thou succour me.
2. Incline thine ear unto me; make haste to deliver me:
Be unto me a strong rock—a castle of defence, to save me.
3. For thou hast proved thyself as my rock and my fortress;
Now, do thou, for thy name's sake, lead and guide me.
4. Draw me out of the net which they have secretly spread for me;
For thou art he who invigoratest me.
5. Into thine hand I commend my spirit;
Thou hast redeemed me, O Jehovah, thou God of truth.

6. I ever abominated those who pay reverence to idols of their delusion :

And as for me, in Jehovah have I put my confidence.

7. I will exult and rejoice in thy tender mercies,

Because thou hast considered my trouble ;

Thou hast befriended my soul when in adversity :

8. And hast not allowed me to be shut up in the power of the enemy ;—

Thou hast made my feet to stand, in an expanded region of liberty.

The son of Jesse found no refuge in the fortress of Keilah, where he had every right to claim it ; but he found an high fortress, a strong elevated rock, and a sure and safe refuge in the tender mercies of Jehovah, and in His free grace. These are the leading sentiments in the First part of this poem. In the 1st verse, he says that he had made Jehovah his refuge ; in the 2d, he prays Jehovah to continue to be his strong Rock, and his castle of defence for his safety ; and in the 3d, he assigns the reason of his confidence, "For thou hast proved thyself (*i.e.* in Keilah) as my rock and my fortress." Hence he is encouraged to expect that the God who had showed him such undeserved mercy, would continue to lead and guide him. The first clause of verse 5 was repeated by our Saviour when expiring on the cross, "Father, into thine hand I commend my soul." David gives the reason in the last clause, "Thou hast redeemed me, O Jehovah, thou God of truth." His wonderful escape from Keilah by God's direction was sufficient to convince him that in Jehovah's hand his soul would be safe. Verses 7 and 8 are a clear commentary on the whole Psalm. David exults and rejoices in the mercies of God, "because He considered his trouble," the danger in which he was ; and "He befriended his soul when in adversity," or, in conflict. What that befriending was is explained in verse 8, that Jehovah did not allow him to be shut up in the power of his enemies (in Keilah), but brought him out, and caused his feet to stand **בְּמֵרְחָב** (Bamerchar), which always means, "in an expanded," or wide extended, "region of liberty."

PART SECOND.—AN ARDENT PRAYER.

9. Be gracious unto me, O Jehovah, for I am still in distress ;
Mine eye fadeth because of vexation ;
So fadeth my soul, and my body.
10. For my life is spent with grief ; and my years with sighing :
My strength is sinking under my punishment, and my bones
are consumed.
11. I became a reproach of mine oppressors, and very much so
of my neighbours ;
Also an object of terror to my acquaintances ;
Who, when seeing me in the street, flee from me.
12. I am forgotten, like a dead man, out of mind ;
I have become like a broken vessel.

13. For I have heard the mutterings of many ;
There was excitement on every side,
When they conspired together against me—
Devising how to take my life.
14. But I have placed my confidence in thee :
O Jehovah, I said, thou art my God.
15. In thine hand are my times :
Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from my
persecutors.
16. Cause thy face to shine on thy servant ;
Save me in thy tender mercy.
17. O Jehovah, let me not be ashamed when I call upon thee :
The wicked shall be put to shame, and silently be carried to
the grave.
18. The lying lips shall be put to shame—
Who speak rebelliously against the righteous, with haughti-
ness and contempt.

David, indeed, had expressed, in the former part of the Psalm, his thankfulness to Jehovah for the wonderful deliverance he had afforded him, as well as his entire confidence in him for the future ; but, remembering the deplorable state in which he still was—the danger and misery by which he was surrounded, he, as usual, lays hold on the strong weapon of prayer, and pours forth a vehement supplication into the bosom of his Divine Friend. The striking contrast between the triumphant tone of the 8th verse, that Jehovah had made his feet to stand, בְּמַרְחָב (Bamerchav), “in an expanded region of liberty,” and the dismal exclamation in the 9th, “Be gracious unto me, O Jehovah, כִּי צָר־לִי (Ki Tzar Li), for I am still in distress,” seems designed to show that, although he had been delivered from great danger, his condition was still lamentably critical and perilous. We have therefore rendered the clause thus, “For I am *still* in distress.” The word עֲוֹנִי (Avoni), in verse 10, means, “my punishment,” or even, “my sufferings.” It signifies the same in Lev. xxvi. 41—43 ; 1 Sam. xxviii. 10 ; 2 Kings vii. 9. Verse 11. “I became a reproach of,” or through, *i.e.* by reason of, “mine oppressors.” Verse 12. The figure here is this, that none cares much either for a dead man, or a broken vessel. The expressions in verse 13 are intended to mark the extreme danger of his situation, for it was not one enemy only he had to do with ; but a multitude had conspired together against him, who would be content with nothing else but his death. Verse 15. “In thine hand are my times,” or circumstances, which may be graciously altered by God. The word יִדְמוּ (Yidmu), in verse 17, signifies not only “a being silent,” but standing connected with לִשְׁחָל (Lishol), means farther, that they shall be silently carried into their graves ; *i.e.* that none shall lament them. Verse 18. The term עֲתָק (Athak) means “rebelliously,” impudently in violence. See Ps. xciv. 4, and note there.

PART THIRD.

DAVID'S THANKSGIVING FOR HIS DELIVERANCE FROM KEILAH.

19. How great is thy goodness,
In that thou hast concealed those that fear thee :
This, thou hast manifested to them that trust in thee,
In the sight of the sons of men !
20. O, mayest thou hide them in the secret of thy presence, from
the conspiracies of man :
O, mayest thou conceal them in a pavilion, from the conten-
tion of tongues.
21. Blessed be Jehovah ;
For he hath showed me his wonderful compassion,
In the fortified city.
22. I indeed thought, in my great agitation, that I am separated
from before thy sight ;
But surely thou didst hear the voice of my supplication when
I cried unto thee.
23. O love Jehovah, all ye his saints : Jehovah preserveth the
faithful ;
And payeth retribution in abundance to him who acts arro-
gantly.
24. Be strengthened, and let your hearts be invigorated,—
All ye who confidently wait for Jehovah.

Beautiful though the thought be in the first clause of verse 19, as it stands in the common version—"How great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee"—and though it has been followed by most commentators ; yet we must take the liberty of saying, that the original has been entirely misunderstood, and that it contains no such idea. The original reference of the whole third part of the Psalm has been mistaken. David, in this verse, speaks of the wonderful manifestation of Jehovah's goodness in having, as it were, concealed him and his men (concealed them by his counsel) from the danger they were in, and in having done this openly before the eyes of men. When the wicked and treacherous inhabitants of Keilah had secretly plotted to deliver them into the hands of Saul ; how must they have been amazed when they saw that Jehovah, by the Oracle, had discovered their conspiracy, and enabled David and his men to escape ? Having thus expressed his gratitude for Jehovah's goodness in concealing and delivering those that fear him, he, in the next verse, entreats the Lord to continue to extend the same protecting care over them : "O mayest thou hide them in the secret of thy presence !" What a glorious expression ! And where is there more security, more safety than in Jehovah's almighty presence ? The second clause of this verse is in exact agreement with what we have remarked on the 19th. There David said, "How great is thy goodness, in that צָפַנְתָּ (Tzaphanta)

thou *hast concealed* those that fear thee," and here he prays for the continuance of such mercy, saying תִּצְּפֶנִּי (Titzpenem), "mayest thou *hide* them, or *conceal* them (the same verb is used in Josh. ii. 4, Rahab concealed the two spies) in a pavilion," or tabernacle, "from the contention of tongues," or from the war caused by false tongues. But the 21st verse determines the reference and occasion of the whole Psalm, and also suggests the reason for his thanksgiving in the third and concluding part of it, "Blessed be Jehovah, for he hath showed me his wonderful, or marvellous compassion בְּעִיר מְצוֹר (Beir Matzor), in the fenced, or fortified city,"* *i.e.* in Keilah, whence he so marvellously escaped.

In the 22d verse, David calls to remembrance his lamentable situation in the cave of Adullam, where he was brought to the verge of despair, thinking that Jehovah had separated him from his presence altogether; but the answers he received from God by the Oracle showed him how far he was mistaken. He therefore calls upon the godly in his band to depend on Jehovah, and to be of good courage.

"When it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah, he forbore to go forth." 1 Sam. xxiii. 13. On leaving Keilah, he came, as we have seen, into the wilderness of Ziph, "and abode in the wilderness in strongholds," or caves, "and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph; and Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand." 14. From this passage we may conclude, that David abode there for a considerable time, dwelling in the caves which abounded in that mountainous wilderness region.

But we should suppose that David's circumstances were far more favourable now, than when he was a lonely fugitive in the cave of Adullam, and that he had no reason to utter such dismal complaints as he then did, saying, "The enemy hath persecuted my soul, he crushed down my life to the dust, and caused me to dwell in darkness as the dead of the world. Therefore is my soul overwhelmed within me, and my heart within me is desolate," or sore bewildered. Ps. cxliii. 3, 4. Surrounded as he was with six hundred men, he could venture forth occasionally into the neighbouring country, as indeed he would be necessitated to do, in order to pro-

* Commentators have been greatly perplexed, and have written much to little purpose, regarding the meaning and reference of the expression in this verse, "in a fortified city." Hengstenberg, who has misunderstood the Psalm in general and perverted its meaning, without apparently taking any trouble to investigate the matter for himself, adopts and quotes the opinion of the learned Arnd, as follows: "The strong city is God himself, and his powerful and gracious protection, in which we are even more secure than in a strong city." With all deference to Mr Arnd, we hold this opinion to be erroneous, because it is entirely at variance with the true meaning of the original, as we have shown above. Hengstenberg maintains that there is "a want of all special historical reference" in this Psalm, and assigns as a cogent reason for this, that because three successive verses in the middle of it happen to begin with three successive letters of the alphabet, the Psalm is therefore alphabetical; and, says he, "all alphabetical Psalms are of a general character!" The reader must perceive how foolish and puerile such reasoning is. To say that, because of such a coincidence, a Psalm must be alphabetical, is absurd. Besides, his conclusion is wrong; it is false in point of fact. All alphabetical Psalms are not "of a general character;" the xxxiv., for example, is alphabetical, and has "special historical reference" from beginning to end—having been composed by David when he changed his behaviour before the King of Gath, who drove him away, and he escaped.

cure supplies for himself and his followers. Confirmed as his faith had lately been in the protection of the Most High, who had showed him his marvellous compassion in the fortified city, though still proscribed and beset with danger, but little reason existed for such bitter and agonizing complaints as were wrung from him in Adullam. But with the comparative freedom which he now enjoyed, sorrow filled his heart, arising from another cause. He felt most deeply his deprivation of divine ordinances, and bewailed the absence of the spiritual enjoyments of God's sanctuary. The remembrance of these sweet seasons of gracious communion, now altogether suspended, filled his heart with sorrow and disquiet, and he betook himself to God. The lxxiii. Psalm was composed on this occasion, as we learn from its title, and from internal evidence. From it we may gather what it was for an Old Testament saint to be deprived of his covenant privileges, and of the typical exercises enjoined to be performed in the tabernacle before the Cherubim. Though David knew that the Divine presence was not confined to the tabernacle—though he showed in many Psalms that these typical exercises were but shadows of good things to come; still as Israel lived under that dispensation—as Jehovah was pleased to make his Shechinah rest between the Cherubim in a temple made with hands, the saints of old were wont to look for special manifestations of his gracious presence there. This to them was heaven upon earth, and the observance of these exercises was their spiritual nourishment. Thus, "a saint of old without the tabernacle and altar," was, so to express it, shut out from God; as will be seen from David's complaints in the following Psalm.

PS LXIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXVIII.

"A SONG OF DAVID WHEN HE WAS IN THE WILDERNESS OF JUDAH."

1. O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee:
My soul thirsteth for thee: my flesh longeth after thee;
Even like this dry, wearied, and waterless region—
2. So am I for seeing thee in the sanctuary—
For beholding thy power and thy glory.

David's longing desire even in this inhospitable desert, was not for the presence and the company of his fellow-men, as it had been in the cave of Adullam: no, his spirit began to fade and fail because of his continual longing after the presence of his God, represented by the Shechinah dwelling between the Cherubim, and for the spiritual enjoyments of his sanctuary. He had received mercies from Jehovah in abundance since he became an exile, and all that he had hitherto been able to do was but to utter complaints and strong supplications; but his soul longed earnestly for the time when he should encompass Jehovah's altar with praises of thanksgiving and joy. "O God, thou art my God;" Thou hast proved thyself to be such, times without number: "early will I seek thee;" *i.e.* whenever Thou in thy providence shalt open up my way, I will seek thee—I will thank and praise and adore thee, and endeavour to advance the glory of thy great name.—The second and third clauses of the first verse stand in close connexion with the second verse, which the division (often

injudicious) of the Scriptures into chapters and verses, has unhappily separated. David having, in the first clause, expressed his determination early to seek his God, proceeds to state his reason: "My soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth after thee (here we must read כֶּעֶרֶץ (Keeretz) instead of בְּעֶרֶץ [Beeretz], for it is, 'like this,' and not, 'in this,' which has no force), even like this dry, wearied, and waterless region; so am I for seeing thee in the sanctuary; for beholding thy power and thy glory." And now his soul becomes wrapt in high and adoring contemplation—he is filled with the Spirit—and he feels that if he could be but even once permitted to behold the place where the ark of the covenant stood, and to surround Jehovah's altar, though it were at the expense of life itself, he would most cheerfully make the sacrifice:

3. For thy loving-kindness is better than life.
O that my lips could adore thee!
4. O how would I bless thee with all my life,
Could I but lift up my hands in thy name!
5. As with the fat and oil my soul would be filled,
And in the strains of nightingales, my mouth would adore.

These figurative expressions are taken from the tabernacle services at the altar. When the offerer brought his sacrifices of joy (thank-offerings) to the altar, and when the priest offered the fat and the oil, or cakes of oil, upon the altar, he lifted up his hands with the fat over against the sanctuary; and the offerer did the same, in token of devoting it to Jehovah upon his altar. Afterwards, the Levites began to sing praises to the Lord, while the sweet-smelling savour ascended on high in the midst of the flame and smoke from the altar. But David, who was to furnish the Levites with songs of praise and adoration for the sanctuary service, was now far removed from the scene; and what wonder that he thirsted for it, like the dry and wearied desert thirsting for water. David, without a sanctuary, was like a body without a soul. "For thy loving-kindness is better than life." O blessed discovery! O wonderful experience of the saints! Where were now the dark clouds which enveloped his soul? Where now his fear and trembling for those who could only kill the body? All dispelled and forgotten. He was persuaded that the loving-kindness of Jehovah was far better than this transitory and troubled life, and therefore he cast away all his burden of fear and sorrow. Having been twice vouchsafed an answer by the Urim and Thummim (for by it none had right to make enquiries but the king, the chief judge, and the chief captain of the armies), David saw that God was favourable to him, and that he would fulfil all his promises. He now felt that he was the real king of Israel, and he designates himself such in the last verse of the Psalm. Then would he surround Jehovah's altar with sacrifices of joy—then would he offer burnt-offerings, the types of his great Son, the everlasting David. His soul would be filled by seeing the fat and the oil offered there, as if he had partaken of it—he would lift up heart and soul and hands to the living God, and adore him, as in the strains (or literally with the lips) of a nightingale, in songs of praise.

In the second part of the Psalm, David explains why he would thus early seek God—

6. When I remember thee on my bed,
Meditating on thee in the night watches :—
7. That thou hast been a help for me—
That I can rejoice under the shadow of thy wings :
8. Then my soul pursueth hard after thee ;
And thy right hand upholdeth me.

While mankind were locked in slumber, David on his bed remembered God, and meditated on him in the silent watches of the night. He recalled the mysteriousness of the Divine dealings towards him—the multitude of mercies which had been bestowed upon him—the wonderful deliverances which had been wrought for him when in his lonely, persecuted, and helpless condition—and the cheering and glorious hopes which he was warranted to entertain. Jehovah had indeed been his help ; good cause he had to rejoice under the shadow of his protecting wings. “Then,” or therefore, says David, in verse 8, “my soul pursueth hard after thee” (this is the meaning of דָּבַקָה [Dovkah], to pursue hard after in order to overtake one. See Gen. xix. 19, xxxi. 23 ; Judg. xx. 42 ; 1 Sam. xiv. 22, and many other passages.) And how could it be otherwise ? Who would not follow hard after such a glorious, faithful, and omnipotent Friend ? But he was not only encouraged by the remembrance of former mercies to pursue after God—in the very pursuit he was strengthened by him ; he was sustained and enabled to continue faithfully to run. “Thy right hand upholdeth me.”

In the two succeeding verses David foretells the doom of his enemies, seeing he had such a mighty Protector.

9. But they who for destruction do seek my soul,
Shall enter into the hindermost regions of the earth.
10. They shall be grinded to pieces by the power of the
sword,
They shall become prey for the jackals.

This prediction was literally fulfilled—his enemies who, along with Saul, sought his destruction, having been cut to pieces on mount Gilboa by the power of the sword. The compound word יָגִירוּהוּ (Yagiruhu) is taken from the root גִּיר (Gir), which signifies, “rubbish of small beaten or grinded stones.” Thus in Isa. xxvii. 9, כְּאֶבְנֵי-גִיר מְפִצּוֹת (Keavney gir, menu-patzoth), “Like the scattered rubbish of stones,” or, “Like the small grinded stones, scattered.” So would Judah make the stones of his altars. The word has a comprehensive meaning here : “He,” *i.e.* the Lord, “shall grind and scatter” them by the power of the sword. The שְׁוֹעַל (Shual) of the Scriptures often signifies, the jackal, or wild dog of Palestine ; it is

very like the fox, and abounded in the forests and mountainous districts of that country. These were of course soon gathered to the field of battle to prey upon the carcasses of the slain. Hence the expression, "They shall become prey for the jackals." The enemies of David, cut to pieces by the power of the sword, were left a prey to the wild dogs on Mount Gilboa.

In the closing verse, David anticipates by faith his own deliverance and exaltation—

11. But the king shall rejoice in God ;
 Triumph shall every one that sweareth by him ;
 When the mouth of the liars shall be stopped.

This is the first passage in which we find David calling himself "king." His soul was now exalted in the Lord, and he was greatly cheered by the answers which he had received by the Oracle, which was a certain proof that Jehovah, who had anointed him king by Samuel, acknowledged him as such, while he had rejected Saul, and esteemed him as dead. He was now no longer the lonely shepherd—he had with him hundreds of valiant men who acknowledged him as their head, knowing that God had anointed and appointed him to be king of Israel. That this was a fact well known throughout the kingdom, may be learned from the interview which took place between Jonathan and him, recorded in 1 Sam. xx. 13, &c., when the former said, "And O may Jehovah be with thee, as he hath been with my father." And on another occasion, when Jonathan came, and strengthened his hand in God, he said to him, "Fear not; for the hand of Saul my father shall not reach thee: and thou shalt be king over Israel. . . . and that also Saul my father knoweth." 1 Sam. xxiii. 16, 17. Still farther, we may refer to chapter xxiv. 19—22 of the same book, and especially to the 20th verse, in which Saul himself said to David: "And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand." We may, moreover, refer to another illustration of it, in the case of Abigail (1 Sam. xxv.), whose miserable, churlish husband, Nabal, would not acknowledge God's right to appoint kings in Israel, and stigmatized David as a rebel, and who came to a fearful end, not by the sword of the latter, but by the immediate stroke of the Divine avenging hand.* Her address to David, on the occasion there described, clearly showed the general belief that he was destined to fill the throne, and that he was privately acknowledged as the future king, though fear of Saul (himself secretly convinced of the fact) prevented that acknowledgement from being openly made. She recognised him as the captain who fought the battles of the Lord, and whom the Lord would ap-

* An article, bearing the title "David," appears in Kitto's *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*—an able and deservedly popular work, though the sentiments of various of its articles are highly reprehensible. In this article, David, instead of being recognized as a type of Messiah, and acknowledged to have been by Divine direction anointed to be king over Israel, is opprobriously called a robber captain over a band of freebooters, &c; but to characterize this production, as a whole, as being any thing less than a gratuitous and flagrant attack upon this department of revealed truth, would be a betraying of Christianity, and a sacrificing of its interests at the shrine of a daring infidelity. "O full of all subtilty and all mischief," &c, Acts xiii. 10.

point to be ruler over Israel, for he had promised to make to him a sure house, and to establish his kingdom for ever.

The knowledge and belief, then, of the fact was general, but of the manner of its becoming known the sacred history gives no precise information. David was anointed privately by Samuel; but when Saul's jealousy of him was excited because of the honours paid him by the people for having vanquished and slain Goliath, and saved Israel, and when therefore he ceaselessly persecuted him and sought his life, it is highly probable that the prophet divulged the fact that he had, by the direction of God, anointed David to be king in Saul's room, in order to the preservation of his life. Knowing that the mind of God was revealed to Samuel as a prophet, men would fear to lay violent hands on one who had been thus anointed. It is highly probable also, that Samuel might reveal the matter to Saul himself, to convince him that all his attempts to destroy David, however persevered in, would be utterly fruitless. Or, to take another view of it: When the sons of the prophets were under the impulse of the Spirit, it might have been revealed to, and publicly made known by them; or, when David fled to Samuel in Ramah (as we read in 1 Sam. xix. 18—24), and Saul sent successive companies of messengers thither in quest of him, and afterwards went himself—on all of whom the Spirit of prophecy came as they arrived; it might be, that the will of God concerning David might then have been openly declared.

After David was anointed, the Spirit of God departed from Saul and came upon him. The knowledge of his being divinely chosen and appointed to the throne, induced hundreds of Israelites to resort to him, and acknowledge him as their head.* Saul was no longer answered by the Oracle, but David was; and when he considered the faithfulness of God to his promises, the wonderful deliverances which he had wrought for him, and the direction vouchsafed to him in all his ways, surely he could say regarding himself, "But the king shall rejoice in the Lord." In those days it was customary for such as were sincere friends and faithful attached followers of the king, to swear by his life—many examples of which we have in Scripture; and he adds, therefore, "Triumph shall every one that sweareth by him;" *i.e.* all his faithful followers who acknowledge him as king, shall triumph at last in their king; and this shall take place, "When the mouth of the liars shall be stopped," *i.e.* when his enemies should be subdued, his persecutors cut off, the liars and slanderers put to silence, and he established on the throne.†

* From a careful examination of the 11th and 12th chapters of 1 Chronicles, it will be found that many of the most eminent men in Israel, the mightiest and the most faithful, joined David at intervals even during the life-time of Saul, influenced by Samuel's prediction concerning him. Even the greatest of the tribe of Benjamin came to him to help him. Many, no doubt, resorted to him from base and selfish motives, but many also out of regard to God's appointment.

† In addition to what has been already advanced, respecting the general knowledge and belief of the fact of David's having been divinely chosen and anointed king, we may observe, that when in this Psalm he styled himself "king" (although the Psalm was not made public till after his elevation to the throne, when he gave it out along with others to be used in the temple service), he evinced his firm faith in Jehovah's promises, and his full persuasion that they would be performed. Some commentators, from misconception of the proper understanding of the word, as used by David here, have erroneously supposed that the Psalm was written by him on the occasion of his flight from Absalom. The title informs us, that it was written in the wilderness of Judah; but, to suit their view, the wilderness must needs have been carried beyond Jordan, where certainly it never was.

David being soon after informed that Saul was again preparing to renew his persecution of him that he might take his life, removed into the woods of the wilderness of Ziph. There Jonathan, his faithful friend, visited him, and exhorted him to be of good courage, and to banish fear; told him that the hand or power of his father would never reach him, for that he would be king over Israel according to the Lord's appointment, which his father well knew; and then solemnly renewed his covenant with him. 1 Sam. xxiii. 15—18. The Ziphites, who inhabited the country adjoining, and who seem at first to have been on friendly terms with David and his men, formed a conspiracy to deliver him into the hand of Saul. Accordingly they went to Gibeah, where the latter then was, informed him of David's hiding places, and engaged to betray him and deliver him up, provided Saul would come to the vicinity with his army. This news was cheering to his heart; he blessed the Ziphites, and commended them for their detestable treachery, saying, "Ye have compassion on me." He directed them to go again, "and prepare, and take knowledge of all his hiding places;" and that he would "search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah." David was informed of the wicked plot, and the activity displayed by the treacherous Ziphites warned him that his danger was great and imminent. In this emergency his first recourse, as usual, was prayer—he took refuge under the shadow of his almighty Protector, approaching his throne in the attitude of a suppliant.

Psalm liv. is the substance of his address to Jehovah at that time. Its dedicatory title, "Lamnatzeach," means, as has been repeatedly explained, that it is dedicated to the Chief Cause of all Events: "Maskil;" that it contains an ardent and serious supplication; and the word "Binginoth" signifies, "with music," or "with a melody" of any kind, whether vocal or instrumental—intimating, that the Psalm was so constructed as that any sort of music, vocal or instrumental, could afterwards be adapted to it. It is divided into two parts by one Selah.

PS. LIV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXIX.

"Lamnatzeach." Dedicated "To the Chief Cause of all Events."

"Maskil Le David." An ardent prayer of David.

"Binginoth." To be performed with music (vocal or instrumental).

"Composed when the Ziphites went and told Saul, Behold, David hideth himself with us."

1. O God, save me for the sake of thy name;
And plead my cause in thy great power.
2. O God, hear my prayer—attend to the words of my mouth.
3. For spies have risen up against me, and violent men seek my
soul;
They have not set God before them, Selah, continually.

It is said of God, that he is the Father of the fatherless and the advocate of

the widow ; but the word דָּיֹן (Dayon) is usually misinterpreted "judge," i.e. "judge of the widow,"—so, in the case before us, David surely does not pray for judgment upon himself, but upon his enemies ; he says therefore, "O God, save me for the sake of thy name, and plead, or, advocate my cause in, or, by thy great power." There is also a great mistake made in the 3d verse, by rendering the word זָרִים (Zarim), "strangers." The Ziphites surely were Israelites, and not strangers. The fact is, that this word is taken from זָרָה (Zarah), the primary meaning of which is "to scatter," "to disperse," also "to sift," as grain. Hence it signifies likewise figuratively, to sift a matter, to investigate, to search out, to trace out. It has this meaning in Psalm cxxxix. 3, "My path and my lying down," i.e. the place of my lying down, זָרִית (Zeritha), "hast thou traced out, or spied out ;" therefore it follows, "Hence thou art acquainted with all my ways." So here, David complains of the new and dangerous enemies he had got in the Ziphites, who became Saul's spies. When he pleads, therefore, for deliverance, saying, "Save me, O God," &c., he describes the danger he was in, "For spies have risen against me, and violent men (or mighty and terrible, and also violent men, for the 'Aritzim' includes all this) seek my soul." He then adds that these mighty and violent men are still more dangerous, inasmuch as there is no fear of God before their eyes : in their deeds of violence they never remember that there is a righteous God who will judge them according to these deeds,—“They have not set God before them, Selah, continually.” The *Selah* here has its common meaning, and also its common strength in the Hebrew language. But when David says, that they do not continually set God before their eyes, he means, that they never do so—that they never consult God in any of their proceedings, but act in opposition to his will, to his law, and to their own convictions.

In the next two verses, David expresses his confidence in the God of his promises, that he will deliver him and punish the wicked.

4. But, O behold, God is my helper ;
My God is with those who support my soul.
5. O let the mischief be turned upon those who watch me ;
Because of thy faithfulness waste them utterly.

In his dangerous situation he was not alone. He had mighty and valiant men around him who were ready to die for him. But what were these in themselves, had not the great Watchman of Israel promised him his protection ? He therefore says, as it were, to the godless and violent spies, "Behold, God is my helper ;" I do not trust in a mere arm of flesh ; the Almighty Lord of hosts whom ye despise, he, and he alone, is my helper : "My God is with those who support my soul,"—thus there are more for me than all they that can be against me.

David had already vowed a solemn vow to the Lord when he was in danger in Philistia (see Psalm lvi., or xii. in this book), a vow of thank-offerings ; and as it was not lawful to vow another vow of the same kind till the former one had been paid, the vow he now makes, as expressed in

the following *versee*, consists of free-will offerings, which he would perform when he was delivered from his present calamities.

6. With free-will offerings will I come to sacrifice unto thee :
I will praise thy name, O Jehovah, for thou art good :—
7. When thou hast delivered me from every distress,
When mine eye hath seen the end of mine enemies.

(Compare exposition of verses 12 and 13 of Psalm lvi., or xii. of this Book.)

In fulfilment of the agreement entered into between Saul and the Ziphite spies, the latter went before to the wilderness, while the former followed them with his army. David, on hearing of it, immediately retreated to the woods of the wilderness of Maon, but the spies traced him thither, and drew Saul after him ; whereupon he withdrew to the mountains, his enemies still following in close pursuit. Here he was nearly swallowed up, for "Saul being on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain," escape was out of the question. "Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them." But when all human help failed, Jehovah wonderfully interposed. A messenger came to Saul, in great haste, with tidings that the Philistines had invaded the land. Being convinced that David could not now escape, surrounded as he was by the watchful Ziphites, he determined in the meantime to march against the Philistines, and prevent them from possessing themselves of his strongholds. But David did escape ; and it must have been on this occasion that he composed the 35th Psalm, as internal evidence will show.

The Psalm originally is divided into three parts, not by *Selahs*, however, but by its contents. The First part celebrates the wonderful deliverance which the Lord wrought for him from such extreme danger ; verses 1—10. The Second describes the falsehood and treachery of the Ziphites, who had lived with him on apparently friendly terms, but who had rewarded him evil for good ; 11—16. And the Third consists of ardent prayer ; 17 to the end.

PS. XXXV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXX.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

PART FIRST.

1. Contend thou, O Jehovah, with them that contend with me ;
Fight thou with them that make war against me.
2. Lay hold on shield and buckler, and arise for my defence.
3. Draw out the javelin, and shut up the way against my pursuers :
O say thou to my soul, I AM THY SALVATION.
4. Ashamed and confounded shall be those who seek after my
soul ;
They shall be turned back, and put to confusion that devise
my hurt.

5. They shall be like chaff before the wind,
When Jehovah's angel shall thrust them.
6. Their ways shall be dark and slippery,
When Jehovah's angel shall chase them.
7. For without cause they secretly spread for me a trap of
destruction;
Without a cause they undermined my soul.
8. Thou hast brought him into confusion unexpectedly,
That ~~the~~ very net which he secretly spread might catch him;
When in the midst of confusion, he shall fall therein.
9. But my soul shall exult in Jehovah,—rejoicing in his salvation.
10. All my bones shall say, O Jehovah, who is like unto thee?
Delivering the afflicted from one that is stronger than he;
And the poor and destitute from his robber.

The figures contained in these verses are very clear, and expressive of David's wonderful deliverance by the interference of Providence. It was Jehovah who rose to fight with them that made war against him. He laid hold on his weapons, and rose up for his defence. In the 3d verse, the figure is taken from a fact in Balaam's history. When he was going to curse Israel, the angel of God came with a drawn sword in his hand to stop his way. So it was here; as if the Lord had come with His drawn sword, and made a barrier between Saul and his army and David, and, whilst checking the former, He said to the latter, Fear not, "I am thy salvation." While in the 4th verse he says, as if in the form of prayer, that his enemies would be turned back, and put to shame and confusion; he speaks in verse 8 of the fact, that it was indeed so, "Thou hast brought him into confusion unexpectedly," *i.e.* Saul was brought into confusion by the unexpected message which he received, so that the very net he had laid for David caught himself, inasmuch as by his wicked plots against the former, he left room for his dreaded enemies the Philistines to invade his territory. In verses 9 and 10, David celebrates the happy results of the whole mysterious transaction; his soul rejoices in Jehovah, who had delivered him, afflicted, poor, and helpless, from one that was stronger than he, even from Saul, whom he also calls "robber" in the last clause of the 10th verse, and very justly, for he was worse than a robber, contriving to rob him of his life.

PART SECOND.

11. There rise up witnesses of violence;
What I knew not of, do they demand of me.
12. That they might reward me evil for good,
Even to the very destruction of my soul.
13. But, as for me, when they were sick,
My clothing was sackcloth.
I afflicted my soul with fasting:—
O may my prayers return into my own bosom.
14. I truly behaved myself like an intimate friend, yea, like a
brother;

- Like a mourning mother, so was I depressed with grief.
 15. But in my adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together;
 Like murderers they unexpectedly assembled themselves against me;
 They would have torn me, had they not been checked.
 16. For a little contemptible flattery, they gnash at me with their teeth.

In the first part of this Psalm, David detailed his miraculous deliverance when danger was so imminent; and from the 11th verse he describes the wickedness of the Ziphites, with whom he had lived amicably for a considerable time, but who had now turned out to be treacherous and deadly enemies. He describes them as "witnesses of violence," or as bearing false witness against him to destroy him violently, and this they did by accusing him falsely—by laying crimes to his charge, of which he was innocent and knew nothing. Verse 12 contains the reason why they did so, viz., "That they might reward him evil for good," and that cruel design extended "even to the very destruction of his soul." This is the meaning of שָׁחַל לְנַפְשִׁי (Shechol Lenaphshi), "To the destruction or ruin of my soul."

In verses 13 and 14, David describes the faithfulness and kindness he showed to the Ziphites, and how he shared with them in their times of distress. It was customary in Israel for intimate friends to sympathize with each other in circumstances of trial and calamity. Job's friends came to condole with him. But these wicked men proved unworthy of David's kind attentions; therefore, says he, in verse 13, "O may my prayers," i.e. offered for them, "return into mine own bosom." (Compare Matt. x. 12, 13, "If the house be not worthy, let your peace return to you.") In verses 15, 16, he describes their wicked behaviour to him when distress came upon him, instead of sympathizing with him. וְנִצְּלִי (Uvtzalii),

"But in my adversity," or, "in my breach," as the word oftener signifies, "they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together," i.e. to kill him, "like murderers they unexpectedly assembled against me." נִכְּחִי (Neelimi)

here means, "murderers," "man-slayers," from נָכַח (Nakeh), "let us slay, or kill." "They would have torn me," וְלֹא דָמָה (Velo Damu), (the ך stands here for אִם [Im]), "had they not been checked," or, "reduced to inactivity," i.e. by the messenger who, in the providence of God, came and called Saul away. In verse 16 he mentions how the petty flattery which the Ziphites received from Saul when they betrayed him, induced them to become his deadly enemies (see 1 Sam. xxiii. 21—23.) בְּחִנְפֵי לַעֲגִי

בְּחִנְפֵי (Bēchanphey Laagey Maog.) Now חֲנֵף (Chaneph) means a "hypocritical flatterer;" לַעֲגִי (Laagi), "contempt," "ridicule," &c.; מְעוֹג (Maog) means "a very little, a trifle," also, the smallest piece, as of bread; so 1 Kings xvii. 12. Elijah wanted a morsel of bread, but the widow replied, "As the Lord liveth, I have not even the smallest bit;" but here it signifies "little;" and the literal arrangement of the verse is,

"For flattery, contemptibly little, they gnash at me with their teeth:" that is to say, that the contemptible little flattery which they received from Saul, turned them from being friends into cruel murderers.

PART THIRD.

17. O Jehovah, how long wilt thou look on ?
Restore my soul from their violence—
From the young lions my lonely one.*
18. So will I thank thee in the great assembly—
Among a mighty nation will I praise thee.
19. Let not my treacherous enemies rejoice over me ;
Let not those who causelessly hate me wink the eye.
20. For they do not yet speak of peace ;
And against the peaceful in the land they devise deceitful schemes.
21. And they widen their mouth against me, saying,
Exult, exult, for our eyes have seen it.
22. O Jehovah, thou hast seen it, keep not silence ;
O my God, remove not to a distance from me.
23. Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment—
My God and my Lord, to plead my cause.
24. Administer justice unto me according to thy righteousness,
O Jehovah my God ; and let them not triumph over me.
25. Let them not say in their heart, Let our souls exult ;
Let them not say, We have swallowed him up.
26. Let them be ashamed and blush together,
Who would rejoice in my hurt ;
Let those be covered with shame and disgrace, who rise proudly against me,
27. Let those shout and rejoice who delight in my justification ;
And let them ever say,
Magnified be Jehovah, who delighteth in the peace of his servant.
28. Thus shall my tongue proclaim thy righteousness—
Even all day long thy praise.

"Wink the eye," in verse 19. This was a sign which malicious persons made to each other when the object of their malice was gained,—scornfully twisting their eyes together. The Hebrew word here has no sufficiently expressive substitute in the English. The word for the exclamation of triumph is הוֹחֵה (Heoch), which means, "exult," or "rejoice," or "Let me—let us, rejoice or exult." Hence, verse 21, the enemies widened their

* See exposition of Psalm xxii. (in this book, Psalm xiii.) verse 20, on the expression "my lonely one." The Hebrew word here is the same as there, though used in a different sense. The reason is because the second and third clauses of verse 17, and the whole of verse 18, are borrowed from Ps. xxii. 20, 22. It may therefore be understood here as denoting "helpless," or "forsaken," if we do not take it in a typical sense.

mouth against David; *i.e.* in triumphant laughter, saying, "Exult! exult! for our eyes have seen it," *i.e.* David's distress. So certain were the Ziphite murderers of his ruin, that they already triumphed over him; therefore he entreats the Lord, verse 25, that this their triumph might not be verified at last.

When David had effected his escape, as before narrated, he saw that the open wilderness was no longer a place of safety, as his enemies the Ziphites were constantly on the watch. He therefore betook himself with his men to the adjacent regions of the Dead Sea, and found refuge in the strongholds of Engedi. When Saul returned from the pursuit of the invading Philistines, he "took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel," and, under the guidance of the Ziphite spies, who had narrowly observed the fugitives, he came to the very rocks, situated among which was the cave wherein David and his men were concealed. Saul and his army having encamped there, the former were of course hemmed in by them, and entirely in their power, though they were not aware of it. Thus was the son of Jesse once more confined in a dark and dreary cave, and though not lonely as in Adullam, still he was in greater and more immediate danger, for he was surrounded on every side by the hunters for his life, and had they searched the place, he would have been taken and destroyed. But the cave of Engedi was not less honoured than that of Adullam, for within its gloomy precincts two of the most magnificent of his plaintive Psalms were composed. These are the lvii. and lviii., and they both have in their titles, "Al Tashcheth Le David"—"Thou shalt not destroy David;" for the explanation of which the reader is referred to Psalm lix. (or chronologically Psalm xi. in this book), which bears the same title, and was written in a situation equally dangerous. They are also "Michtams;" "Compositions committed to memory"—not written down when they were composed, as circumstances did not allow of it. (See explanation of the "Michtam," Psalm lix.) Psalm lvii. is divided into three parts by two *Selahs*. The lviii. has no *Selah*, but it is originally divided into two parts; the first of which is occupied with a description of the dreadful wickedness of his enemies; and the second, with a prediction of their equally terrible doom.

PS. LVII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXXI.

"Lamnatzeach"—Dedicated "To the Chief Cause of all Events."

"Al Tashcheth Le David"—Thou shalt not destroy David.

"Michtam"—A composition committed to memory, when David hid himself in the cave before Saul.

1. Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me,
For in thee hath my soul taken refuge;
And under the shadow of thy wings I seek shelter,
Until the tormenting calamities pass away.

2. I will cry aloud unto the most high God,
Unto that God who alone can accomplish all for me.
3. He shall send from heaven and save me :
O, the tyrant exhausteth me, Selah, continually :
Yea, God shall send his grace and his faithfulness.

David was in a state of great agitation when the Psalm was composed, and in the first verse he calls upon Jehovah to be gracious to him, because his soul had none for her refuge but God, and that under the shadow of his wings alone could he expect to outlive those tormenting calamities. In the second verse he repeats the resolution, that he would cry aloud to the Most High God, who alone was his אֱלֹהֵי גִמְרִי (*El Gomer*), the God who could accomplish and bring to perfection what he had promised, and had begun to fulfil. And in the third, he expresses his confidence that Jehovah would send salvation from heaven, and that he would send his grace and his faithfulness (the results of his faithfulness); but overpowered for the moment under an overwhelming sense of oppression and fear, he abruptly exclaims in the midst, "O, the tyrant exhausteth me, Selah, continually"—meaning thereby the tyrant Saul, who allowed him no rest even in the desolation of the desert, but hunted him continually. Nevertheless, when the Psalm was sung in the temple, according to the arrangements of the musicians, the third verse was put thus :

He shall send from heaven, and save me ;
Yea, He shall send his grace and his faithfulness.
O, the tyrant exhausted me. Selah, continually.

The word חֶרֶף (*Chereph*) cannot mean "reproach," because it has no conjunctive letter to unite it to the preceding clause. It stands, therefore, quite by itself as a noun formed from an adjective, and signifies "tyrant" or "villain."

The second part of the Psalm contains a description of his danger, intermixed with prayer.

4. O my soul, I lie in the midst of lions,
Even among men inflamed with fury ;
Whose teeth are spears and arrows, and whose tongue a sharp sword.
5. O God, lift up thyself in the heavens above—
Throughout all the earth in thy glory.
6. Already had they prepared a net for my steps, to prostrate my soul ;
They also digged a pit before me :
But into it they have fallen. Selah, always.

In the 4th verse David bewails his desperate situation, "O my soul, I lie in the midst of lions." He then explains what he means by lions, viz. those enraged and bitter enemies who surrounded the cave, panting after their prey to tear it in pieces. But he soon remembers that there is a

great and exalted God in heaven, who always comes to his aid when danger seems to have reached its utmost extremity ; and he beseeches him, in the 5th verse, to lift up or exalt himself in majesty (as רָמָה [Rumah] here signifies) in the heavens above, and to display his glory throughout the earth, by another deliverance of him, and by the punishment of the wicked. He then calls former deliverances to mind, bygone wonders which his God had wrought for him in similar circumstances—how often the enemy had laid such snares—how often they had nearly laid hold on him—how often the pit had been dug for him, but into which the enemy had always fallen. The last part of the Psalm, therefore, describes the happy results of such experience ; and the reader, recollecting the condition in which David then was, will find additional cause for admiring and imitating him in the faith which he displayed, and the adoring gratitude which filled his heart.

7. My heart is well supported, O God,
My heart is well supported ; I will sing,
Yea, I will sing praise.
8. Awake, O thou my glory—awake, psaltery and harp ;
I will rise along with the morning star.
9. I will praise thee among the peoples, O my God ;
I will sing of thee among mighty nations :
10. For great to the heavens is thy tender mercy ;
And thy faithfulness to the skies.
11. O God, lift up thyself in the heavens above—
Throughout all the earth in thy glory.

This seraphic strain of praise was the result of David's experience of Jehovah's watchfulness over him in former times, as stated in verse 6th. His heart was now נָכוֹן (Nachon), "well supported," or strongly confirmed, *i. e.*, in his faith in God ; he was confident of his speedy interference and deliverance. And being thus encouraged, he called upon his glory, *i. e.*, the Spirit within him, to awake for the sacred purpose of praising Jehovah for his unspeakable mercy ; calling also upon his instruments, in his holy enthusiasm, to awake and be in readiness—as for himself, he would rise along with שָׁחַר (Shachar), the morning star ; when the morning stars sing together, and when the sons of God in the heavens above shout for joy, the sweet Psalmist of Israel would not remain behind, but would constitute an honourable and glorious secondary to the celestial choirs, and praise Jehovah with all his heart.

We now come to the next Psalm, which was also composed at the same time, and contains a fearful description of the wickedness of his enemies, and a prediction of their terrible doom.

PS. LVIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXXII.

"Lamnatzeach"—Dedicated, "To the Chief Cause of All Events."

"Al Tashcheth Le David"—Thou shalt not destroy David.

"Michtam"—A composition committed to memory.

1. Can it be affirmed, O ye confederate, that ye dispense justice—
That ye judge in uprightness the children of men?

David, in this his perilous situation, must have ventured in the night season (as was his custom, see 1 Sam. xxvi. 6, 7,) near the camp of his enemies, where he overheard the slanders and falsehoods uttered against him by the Ziphite spies, and the severe judgments passed upon him. Recollecting also the terrible destruction of the priests of Nob and their families and city, he says, "Can it be affirmed," or, will ye firmly maintain it, "O ye confederate," or faction (for אֱלֵמִים [Elem] here is a noun, and signifies a number of men confederated or combined together, like a bundle of corn, see Gen. xxxvii. 7), "that ye dispense justice—that ye judge in uprightness the children of men?" He then describes their character in the following verse:

2. Although ye contrive wickedness in your heart,
And level the earth with the violence of your hands.

Will ye still maintain your cause? still affirm that ye dispense justice after all the wickedness that ye contrive in your heart? after all the violence with which you level, or fill the earth? (סִלַּת [Paless] means also "to level," or to fill up a valley in making a path; see Ps. lxxviii. 50; Isa. xxvi. 7. Compare also Gen. vi. 13, "For the earth is filled with violence.")

The Psalmist then comes to describe the source of that corruption and rebellion, original sin, which has its dwelling in the innermost parts of man even from his birth; and hence its fruits grow to such a fearful height.

3. The wicked were estranged even from the womb;
From their very birth the speakers of falsehood went astray.
4. Their poisonous sting is like the poisonous sting of a serpent,
Like the deaf adder that stoppeth his ear:
5. That hearkeneth neither to the voice of the charmers,
Nor to the most skilful enchanter.

How truly applicable was this description to the incorrigible, inveterate, and venomous disposition of wicked Saul, so hardened that nothing could produce any impression upon him! Neither his son Jonathan's affectionate and righteous intercession for David (1 Sam. xix. 4—6, xx. 32), nor the unhappy high priest's just and pathetic vindication of himself (xxii. 14—17) had any effect on his cruel and blood-thirsty spirit. The figure is taken from the most dangerous of serpents, whose bite is certain death; and when

the pretended charmers, or enchanter, were called to a person so wounded by them, and when they saw that their conjurations availed nothing, they maintained that the serpents were deaf, and therefore could not be influenced by their charms. David uses this only as a figure, and as such it is very appropriate. Saul belonged to that kind of serpent whose sting was certain death, and no just argument could have any influence with him.

In the remaining part of the Psalm, the terrible judgment of the cruel murderers is predicted:

6. God alone can shatter their teeth in their mouth :

The jaw-bones of the lions to break, Jehovah alone is fit.

When human interposition is unavailing, the resource is in the high and terrible One, for whom no tyrant is too fierce, no murderer too dangerous. Where had David been if the Lord had not preserved him, and at last, broken Saul's jaw-bone at Gilboa? Where had now the Church of God been if the Most High had not shattered the teeth of the beast in his mouth? It must not be supposed that because we have not put this verse in the form of a prayer, our design was, that the expressions in it might be thereby softened as it were; for if this had been the case, if David had been told, or been moved by the Spirit within him, to pray thus against the enemies even of himself, but more especially against the enemies of God and his Church generally, we would have deemed such alteration sinful, on any account whatever. But the fact is, that as David in the preceding verses had spoken of the inability of man, with all his means, to quench the venomous fury of those enemies, so he now says, "God הָרַס (Hores, so it must be pointed), shatters their teeth in their mouth;" meaning, God alone can do so, and indeed does so. The verb נָתַץ (Nethoz) stands the same, "to break," "to grind," *i.e.* 'The jaw-bones of the lions to break—Jehovah alone can do so when all human help is vain. He delivereth the prey from the lion's jaws.

7. They shall dissolve like water, they shall flow asunder ;

When He shall aim his arrows, they shall be as if grinded to pieces.

The fact that, in the latter clause of this verse, David speaks of God in the third person, "When He shall aim his arrows," *i.e.* when God, who alone can manage them, shall aim, or shoot his arrows at them, then "they shall be as if grinded to pieces," proves unquestionably the correctness of our rendering of the 6th in the third person also. There, he says that Jehovah alone could do it; and here, he tells what becomes of those fierce rebels when He does rise up against them.

8. Like a flood which wasteth away rapidly ;

Like the untimely fruit of a woman, so shall they no more see the sun.

This verse stands in close connection with the first clause of the 7th, where he said, "They shall dissolve like water, they shall flow asunder;"

so here he declares the meaning to be, that they will not be like a regular stream whose source is perennial, and therefore continues ever to flow, but like שֶׁבֶלֶל (Shablul), a sudden flood caused by a strong rain (the word is derived from the feminine שֶׁבֶלֶת [Shiboleth], a water flood, see Ps. lxi. 3, 16), or a rapid overflowing of a river, which wastes away as rapidly as it comes; in like manner, the wicked rapidly overspread a country, but shall as rapidly disappear, and like an untimely birth (read אִשָּׁה [Ishah] instead of אֶשֶׁת [Esheth], which is clearly a mistake) shall never see the sun again.

In the following verse the Psalmist turns to the wicked, and tells them that they shall not fatten upon the fruits of their robberies and murders—that they shall not have time to devour their prey—that they shall not even get it cooked. The figure is, that before their cauldrons are heated they (the cauldrons) shall be overthrown, as by a violent hurricane, as if something living and furious were in them.

9. Even before your cauldrons can feel the thorn,
They shall be tempestuously hurled over,
As if by something animated, as if with burning fury.

In Prov. xii. 27, Solomon says, "The deceitful wretch shall not roast his prey," *i.e.* he shall not have time to do so before judgment overtakes him. The same idea is conveyed in this verse, "Even before your cauldrons," or kettles, "can feel the thorn," or bramble, *i.e.* before the cauldrons in which they have put their prey to the fire, to prepare it for devouring, can be heated. The אֶתֶד (Atad), thorn, or bramble, is the largest kind of thorn in Palestine, and was there used as fire-wood. (See Judg. ix. 14, 15.) "כֶּמוֹ חַי" (Kemo Chai), as if something animated, or as if some living, "כֶּמוֹ חַרוֹן" (Kemo Charon) as in burning fury," *i.e.* as if the prey revived in the cauldron by smelling the fire, in a burning fury, and which infuriate thing "shall tempestuously hurl them over." The figure is intended to represent, that the destroyers themselves, with their deadly instruments, shall be hurried into sudden destruction, and the revived prey, as it were, shall escape unhurt.

David then describes the results of the fearful judgment of the wicked.

10. The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance,
He shall wash his steps in the blood of the wicked.

The joy of the righteous here is by no means to be understood as joy at the destruction itself of the wicked, for surely David did not thus rejoice over that of Saul, but rather mourned and lamented it (see 2 Sam. i. 17—27); but the righteous rejoices in the thought that there is a God who pleads his cause, who will not leave him desolate in this valley of humiliation and grief, but will watch over and protect him. So likewise must we be careful not to mistake the meaning of the strong figure in the second clause, that the righteous should wash his steps in the blood of the wicked. The figure is a magnificent one. In Psalm xxvi. 6, David says, "I will wash mine hands in innocency, so will I compass thine altar, O Jehovah." Now,

who can mistake this glorious figure? or think, that one can literally *wash* his hands in *innocency*? The meaning obviously is, that before approaching the altar, he would scrutinize himself thoroughly and impartially in order to ascertain whether any sin were indeed cleaving to him. Compare Matt. v. 23, 24. In like manner, we apprehend that the real meaning of the figure in the clause under consideration is, that "the righteous shall rejoice when he sees God taking vengeance; he shall cleanse his own steps when beholding the condemnation of the wicked," *i.e.* that the condemnation of the wicked shall fill the righteous with a solemn and salutary fear, and put him on his guard respecting his own ways, which is figuratively, "to wash or cleanse his steps." And this lesson he shall receive בָּדָם הָרָשָׁע (Bedam Harasha) by witnessing the condemnation of the wicked. דָּם (Dam) means very often "condemnation," or "destruction," and not "blood." (See Exod. xxii. 2, 3; Jer. l. 30; Hos. iv. 6, &c.)

We come now to the close of the Psalm. Having stated the joy of the righteous at seeing the Divine vengeance executed against their persecutors, David concludes by mentioning the general impression which the judgment of the wicked and the preservation of the just would produce.

11. Thus shall mankind say,

Verily there is a reward for the righteous;

Verily there is a God, O ye judges of the earth.

In the beginning of the Psalm, the question was put to the atheistical and murderous judges, *viz.*, Saul and his associates, whether they dispensed justice? Their wickedness was then represented in a terrible light. Next followed their tremendous doom and its results; and now, says David, "mankind shall say, verily there is a reward, or a rich produce, "for the righteous, verily there is a God, O ye judges of the earth"—thereby intimating that if they did not judge uprightly, their doom would resemble that of those before described.

While Saul and his army were thus unwittingly encamped round about the very cave in which David and his men lay concealed, it providentially happened that on one occasion the former entered it that he might "cover his feet." "And the men that were with David said unto him, Is not this the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee." 1 Sam. xxiv. 4. From this passage it is evident, that David on some former occasion must have asked of God by the Oracle of the Urim and Thummin regarding the issue of matters—the termination of his persecutions by Saul; and that the Lord must have replied, "Behold I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him according to thy will;" *i.e.* I shall deliver Saul, thine enemy, into thy power, and I leave it with thee to do with him according to thy will and pleasure. Of this promise David was now reminded by his men. "Then he arose and cut off the robe of Saul's skirt privily. And it came to pass afterwards, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. And he said unto his men, The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord. So David persuaded his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. And

Saul rose up out of the cave and went on his way." xxiv. 4—7. Such was the remarkable generosity of the son of Jesse—such his forbearance and kind behaviour towards a wicked and persecuting foe, towards one who had been the murderer of the priests of the Lord. Who, after this, will speak of *imprecations in the Psalms*, and not perceive the injustice thereby done to the holy Psalmist, who, in the midst of fitting opportunity for revenge, acted thus forbearingly and generously towards his most deadly enemy? Could David curse his enemies if the Spirit within him did not impel him to do so? Could he who performed the office of a guardian angel towards his enemy when he was in his power, instead of taking his life, have of himself, out of personal hatred, written those Psalms which contain the curses (as they are called), or the predictions concerning Saul? In these Psalms David does not speak his own language, but the Spirit foretells by him the righteous judgments which would be inflicted by the high and terrible Judge of all. (See Introduction, Part III., page 19.) But if we would form a right and just estimate of his personal feelings and disposition, let us contemplate his conduct in the cave when his relentless foe was providentially delivered into his hand, and concerning whom, when so delivered, the Lord had said to him, "Thou shalt do to him as it shall seem good unto thee." No desire of revenge animated his breast; not only did he himself not injure even a hair of his enemy's head, but "he stayed his servants, and suffered them not to rise against him."

We must observe, however, that there was something striking in the promise made to David, as mentioned above. The Lord did not say, "Behold I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand; *then thou shalt arise and take his life*;" but he said, "then thou shalt do unto him as it shall seem good unto thee," *i. e.*, the matter was entirely left to his own judgment. Having, therefore, deliberated with himself, he said to his men, "God forbid that I should do this thing . . . to stretch forth mine hand against him . . . the anointed of the Lord." So affectionately disposed was he towards Saul, that even the cutting off of the skirt of his robe (which he had hastily done) grieved him exceedingly. When the king went forth from the cave, David followed him, and cried after him, and bowed himself before him, and exhibited to him the fragment of his robe which he had in his hand. He told him how desirous his men had been to take his life, but that he had restrained them and preserved him. He then appealed to his own judgment in a most touching yet cutting address, in which at the sametime he reproved him for his conduct, and toward the close of it used these words, "The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee, but mine hand shall not be upon thee." xxiv. 12, 13. Hardened as Saul was, he was melted for the moment by the generosity of David and the power of his appeal; his convictions of his criminality became too strong for repression; "he wept and said to David, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. . . . Now I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand." 16—20. Then, having begged of the future king that he would extend his favour to his family, which was promised and confirmed by an oath, Saul went home. But David returned to his stronghold, and spread the whole case before Jehovah, his promise-keeping God, who had delivered his enemy into his hand, and had enabled him to show that enemy such signal kindness.

The 17th Psalm must have been written after this extraordinary event, when David had time to reflect on all the circumstances of it. God had promised him that he would deliver his enemy into his hand; he had so delivered him in a strikingly providential manner; his men were ready to take his life; he remembered the nature of the promise, that it contained no injunction to kill him—he was only to do with him what seemed to him good; he withstood all temptation to revenge himself, and also prevented his men from destroying him. From all these circumstances David could not but conclude that it was Jehovah's purpose to try him thereby, to see what was in his heart. But the trial proved him a conqueror, as we shall see from the first part of this Psalm.

PS. XVII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXXIII.

"A PRAYER OF DAVID."

1. Hear, O righteous Jehovah, attend to the sound of my plea :
Listen to my prayer, not made with deceitful lips.
2. From thy presence let my sentence proceed ;
Let thine eyes behold the things that are right.
3. Thou hast proved my heart—thou hast appointed a night ;
Thou hast tried me, but found nothing ;
For I was determined not to transgress with my mouth.

In the first two verses, David prepares for his argument contained in the three succeeding ones, which are entirely interwoven with the history. In the third, reference is made to the night of his great trial, which God had appointed for delivering Saul into his hand. "Thou hast proved my heart—**פָּקַדְתָּ לַיְלָה** (*Pakadta Lailah*), thou hast appointed a night." It is no matter of surprise that commentators do not know what to make of this and the following verse, because they entirely overlook the historical reference in them, without regard to which, they must be, as if a sealed book. The two words just quoted they render, "Thou hast visited me by night." Besides that there is no meaning in the expression, that the Lord visited him by night; the "by" and the "me" are wanting in the original; so that even if the word "*Pakadta*" were rendered "*visited*," the passage would read, "thou hast visited the night." But David refers to the night which God had appointed to try him by delivering Saul into his power, and to see how he would act in the matter. "Thou hast appointed a night*—Thou hast tried me, but found nothing; for I was determined not to transgress with my mouth," *i.e.* even with his mouth he was determined not to transgress, for if he would not destroy Saul with his own hand, he might have commanded one of his men to cut him off. But he proceeds in

* There can be no doubt that it must have been in the night when Saul entered the cave, otherwise he would have observed David and his men. The latter, accustomed to the gloom of the place, could easily recognise any object that came in before them. That his men should have said, "Behold, the *day* of which the Lord spake," &c., is quite agreeable to Scripture phraseology—any appointed time being called "*day*."

the 4th verse to show, that not only would he not command his men to kill him, but even when they would perform the operation themselves, by pretending that they were authorized to do so by God's own words, he did what he could to prevent them :

- 4 Even when men would operate, according to the words of thy lips,
I watched the ways of the destroyers.*

"Even when men would operate," or "when men were nearly operating," *i.e.* ready to strike, and thus "according to the words of thy lips, I watched," or guarded, or prevented, "the ways of the destroyers," *i.e.* interposed between them and him, and persuaded them not to touch him. But David does not take the praise to himself, he ascribes it to Jehovah's grace.

5. Thou supportedst my steps in thine own ways :
Therefore it was that my feet did not slip.

Thus he humbly acknowledges that it was not himself who conquered in this matter, but God, who led him in his own way, and supported his steps.

The remaining portion of the Psalm is occupied with prayer, mingled with a complaint of the danger he was still in, and of the malice of his enemies, and their doom.

6. I call upon thee, O God, because thou dost always answer me ;
Bow thine ear unto me, and hear my speech.
7. Marvellously display thy loving-kindnesses,
O thou Deliverer of those who take shelter in thy right hand
From the conspiring rebels.

The exalted poetical construction of the last clause of the 7th verse renders it difficult of translation in the same order into English. According to the Hebrew arrangement of the words, it would stand thus : "O thou Deliverer of those who take shelter from the conspiring" or rising "rebels in

* A clause in the 10th verse of 1 Sam. xxiv. has been misunderstood and mistranslated from want of attention and reference to the meaning of what is contained in verse 4 of that chapter, with which the former is most directly connected, *viz.*, the promise which God had made to David, that he would deliver his enemy into his hand. We read, verse 10, "Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the Lord had delivered thee to-day into mine hand in the cave ; and *some* bade *me* kill thee." Now, the reader will observe that the words "*some*" and "*me*" are in italics, and have no corresponding words in the Hebrew text, which is *וַיֹּאמֶר לְיָהוֹנָתָן* (Vearmar Laharogcha), and signifies, not "bidding," but "and he said to kill thee," *i.e.* he who delivered thee into my hand—the Lord, of whom David speaks in the former verse—"he said to kill thee," referring to the promise mentioned in the 4th verse, "that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee." Thus said David to Saul : Thou wert quite at my disposal ; I could have killed thee, for the Lord who delivered thee into my hand, said, that I might do unto thee according to my pleasure ; "but," continues he, "mine eye spared thee," or literally, mine eye exercised mercy, "and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord, for he is Jehovah's anointed."

thy right hand." This is not, however, of much importance—only, we must understand that shelter is taken in the Deliverer's right hand, in order to be preserved from the "conspiring rebels."

8. Watch over me as over the apple of the eye ;
In the shadow of thy wings thou shalt hide me.
9. From the wicked who thus waste me,
From mine enemies, who, for my soul, compass me about.
10. They are enclosed in their fat,
Hence they speak arrogantly.
11. In all our straight lines they have encompassed us—
Now they set their eyes to thrust us to the ground.

The Ziphite spies followed them in all directions ; there was scarcely a corner in the whole region which remained unexplored ; concealment was out of the question ; there was no refuge for David but under the shadow of Jehovah's wings, and thither they could not follow their prey.

In the next verse, he describes the eagerness of his enemy to lay hold on him ; and in the 13th, again has recourse to prayer.

12. He is like a lion that gaspeth for prey,
And like a young lion lurking in the secret places.
13. Arise, O Jehovah, make haste to meet his face,
Thrust him upon his knees ;
Rescue my soul from the wicked, by thy sword.

The next verse stands in close connection with the last clause of the preceding, in which he prayed that the Lord might rescue his soul from the wicked, by his sword ; now his prayer is, that his soul may be rescued from mortals, by his hand.

14. From mortal men, by thine hand, O Jehovah (*rescue my soul*),
From mortal men, whose prospects in life are of this world ;
And when thou, with thy stores, hast made their bellies overflow,
Then they are gratified with their numerous offspring.
Who likewise shall leave their superabundance to their little ones.

In this verse David gives the characteristics of the men of whom he speaks in verse 10, who, being "enclosed in their fat," *i.e.* surrounded with wealth and abundance, "speak arrogantly," who are worldly-minded, forgetting God and futurity, and caring for nothing but the things of this life ; whose daily pursuits are after temporal riches, and their greatest delights are in the gratifications which these afford. This is comprised in the words מִמְּתִים (Mimthim), "from mortal men," *i.e.* to deliver his soul from such mortals, מִחֶלֶד (Mecheled), "who from this world" חֶלְקֵם בְּחַיִּים (Chelkom Bachayim), "expect their portion in life," *i.e.* whose

prospects are entirely confined to, and centred in, this world. Denying God, denying a resurrection, judgment, eternity, their whole concern is about this life, on amassing the treasures of which, by every kind of means, they are madly intent; and when the Lord (who, in his mysterious providence, allows them to flourish for a while like the grass, that they may be destroyed for ever) has permitted them to heap together so much of his stores as that "their bellies overflow," *i.e.* so much more than they are able to devour in this short life, "then they are gratified with their numerous offspring," *i.e.* they find pleasure in the thought that they have a numerous progeny to whom to leave their treasures; and that *these* again will leave what they were unable to consume to *their* little ones. What a fearful description of an infidel's immortality! His life is not hid in the everlasting God, the Creator of his soul, nor does he wish it to be so; but his desire is that it may be continued in his posterity, like the continued succession of a herd of swine. How cheap and degraded is an infidel's valuation of himself!

Of such the Psalmist says, that they receive their good things in this world, and that they have nothing but misery to expect in the world to come, for their treasures were not laid up in heaven, but on earth, where the thief steals, and the moth of time consumes.

All this David seems to have spoken more immediately concerning wicked Saul, who, when convinced by the remarkable occurrence in the cave, and by the former's address to him on that occasion, that his kingdom was to be taken from him by the irresistible decree of heaven, and given to David—did not humble himself before God—did not confess his wickedness and the bloody violence of his hands in presence of Jehovah, who can not only take away a kingdom, but can also destroy both soul and body in hell. These thoughts, however, had no place in his breast. All his concern was to exact a promise and an oath of David, that he would not destroy his children after him, nor blot out his name from his father's house. 1 Sam. xxiv. 21, 22. But where the high and terrible Judge had decreed destruction and extermination, even David's oath could not avert it.

Having described the wishes and expectations of the wicked in this life, he closes the Psalm by telling us what was the desire of his soul, and what his high and blissful anticipations, both in this life and in eternity.

15. As for me, in righteousness I shall behold thy face;
I shall be greatly delighted, in the awakening, with thy likeness.

These were David's well-founded and glorious expectations as contrasted with, and opposed to, those of the infidel and the wicked. בְּהִקִּיץ (Behakitz) is not a verb here, but a noun, and signifies "in the awakening," or "in the resurrection;" and the Psalmist intimates that he would be greatly delighted in awaking in Jehovah's image, in immortal and incorruptible glory and honour. It was then that he expected to behold God's blessed and reconciled countenance in righteousness—in Him who is the righteousness of God unto salvation to every saint, who is the likeness of God, yea, the express image of Jehovah the Father. "Behakitz" falls back to the first clause also, and the import of the whole verse is, "As for me, I shall in the resurrection behold thy face in righteousness, and be

greatly delighted in beholding thy likeness," or "the express image of thy countenance"—for this is the real meaning of תְּמוּנָה (Temunah) wherever

it occurs, whether in reference to holy or profane, whether spoken of Jehovah or of idols, or of what the latter are intended to represent.

There is a three-fold meaning in the 15th verse, inasmuch as it is in Christ alone, the first-born from the dead, the express image of Jehovah's glory, that the saints will rise immortal, incorruptible, and be like the angels in heaven,—1st, They will greatly delight in the glorious state in which they will rise; 2d, They will greatly delight in Jesus, in whom, and by whom, resurrection and immortality are brought to light; and 3d, They will delight greatly in beholding the blessed and reconciled countenance of Jehovah the Father, whom no eye of flesh can see. This is the difference between the appearance of God to Israel on Mount Sinai, and the happy state in which the saints will behold him in the resurrection. Glorious as the scene on Sinai was, yet the Lord said to Israel, "You have seen no תְּמוּנָה (Temunah), no manner of similitude," or likeness, or countenance; but David speaks of the spiritual glory of the triumphant saints in the resurrection, when they shall see Jehovah as he is, and rejoice in his beatific presence forever and ever.*

David had now seen the fulfilment of God's promise to him, that he would deliver his enemy into his hand, and he had also heard from Saul's own mouth that he would surely be king over Israel. Notwithstanding the friendship, however, which Saul had just professed, and the acknowledgments he had made, David was too well aware, from past bitter experience, of his cruel and changeable temper, to put confidence in him. Besides, he knew that the death of Samuel, which happened about this time, would

* It was not without great pain that we read Hengstenberg's exposition of this verse. Although he shows that even the sceptic De Wette is constrained to acknowledge, that it has exclusive reference to immortality and a world to come, yet he sets himself in opposition to this doctrine, and among other statements boldly says: "But what thoroughly refutes this exposition" (viz., that the verse refers to life eternal), "is the circumstance that, according to it, not merely would there be expressed here a knowledge of eternal life more clear and confident than we could almost expect to find in a Psalm of David, but especially that the Psalmist would declare his entire resignation in regard to earthly things, which in that case he wholly abandons to the wicked, and directs all his hope to what is heavenly." (Hengstenberg on the Psalms, vol. i.)

Now, we ask, can such a statement proceed from ignorance? Does it not rather bear the stamp of design? Does not a spirit of infidelity and profanation appear to pervade it? And does it not raise a suspicion that it is the author's object to strip this portion of the holy oracles of its obvious and unmistakeable meaning and reference, inestimably dear to the true Christian? Has Dr H. never studied 2 Sam. xxiii. 1—8? Between that passage and the last two verses of this Psalm there is a striking parallel. In both, the wicked are represented as miserable, and prepared for destruction, while David makes mention of the everlasting covenant which God had made with him, and the everlasting salvation secured to him in it. In his exposition of the preceding Psalm, Dr H. is compelled to acknowledge (though evidently with much reluctance, and because he cannot evade it) that there is an allusion in it both to the Messiah and to eternal life. But with the closing verse of the one before us, he has been pleased, as we have seen, to deal far otherwise, and to maintain that David's immortality and eternity was the same with that of the wicked described in verse 14th, i.e. in this world. It is a melancholy reflection, that any one professing to expound the Psalms should do so in such a manner as to banish every reference to eternal life, from passages in which this subject is so prominently conspicuous, and to represent the Psalmist as preferring the follies of the world to the glories of immortality and eternity.

leave Saul at perfect liberty to prosecute the evil designs which he might still entertain against him ; for we may suppose that, however deeply and perseveringly the king had hitherto transgressed, he could not but have some secret lingering respect for the venerable prophet, which might impose some restraint upon him (however galling he might feel it) while Samuel lived ; but now that he was dead, all such restraint would be removed. David therefore left the strongholds or caves of Engedi, and wandered about with his men for a considerable time, in south Carmel, in the wilderness of Paran. Here he made acquaintance with the shepherds of Nabal, a man of great substance, to whom he rendered essential service by carefully protecting his flocks, both from ravenous beasts and invading robbers. When he heard in the wilderness that Nabal, who was "a churlish man, and evil in his doings," was preparing a great feast at his sheep-shearing, as was customary on such occasions in the east, he sent ten of his men to him with this message, saying, "Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. And ye shall say כֹּה לַחַי Koh Lechai, 'So thou shalt live,' (which means, in such prosperity and in good health shalt thou be preserved for next year also), "Peace be to thee and to thine house, and peace be unto all that is thine. And now I have heard that thou makest a shearing feast ; and thy shepherds which were with us have not been hurt, nor did they miss anything all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men and they will surely tell thee : Wherefore let my young men find favour in thine eyes ; (for we come in a 'good' or 'feast' day) ; give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David." 1 Sam. xxv. 4—8.* But David's friendly greeting and respectful request found no favour at the hand of the wicked Nabal. He not only treated his men and the message which they brought, with rudeness and contempt, but sneeringly asked, "Who is David ? and who is the son of Jesse ? There be many servants now-a-days that rebel every one against his master," &c. xxv. 10, &c. David's soul was deeply stirred when his men, on their return, reported to him the contumelious and insulting treatment which they had met with from the unjust, hardhearted, drunken "son of Belial," and he immediately resolved on being avenged. But Abigail, Nabal's excellent wife, having been meantime informed by her servants of what had happened, was much grieved at her husband's conduct, and, apprehensive of what might be the result, hastened to meet David, and presenting him with a suitable testimonial of her gratitude, requested his acceptance of it, saying, "Forgive, I pray thee, the trespass of thine handmaid ; for Jehovah will certainly make unto my lord a sure house ; because my lord fighteth the battles of Jehovah, and evil was not found in thee all thy days. Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul ; but the soul of my lord shall be bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God. . . . And it shall come to pass, when Jehovah shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed

* It is wrong and uncharitable to say, as some Christian writers have done, that David "injudiciously exacted a tribute from Nabal." Surely the respectful, humble, begging entreaty of a needy man is a very different thing from "exacting a tribute." A beggar at the door asking for a piece of bread cannot be called a "tribute exactor." The tribute exactor uses other language than, "Give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand."

thee monarch over Israel, that this shall be no grief to thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself." xxv. 28—31. From this address of Abigail we must conclude that the fact of David's having been appointed king over Israel was no secret—on the contrary, that it was generally known that God had promised to establish him on the throne, and by him to send deliverance to his covenant-people. The more criminal, therefore, was Nabal's conduct, and the more excusable David's resentment. The former had reviled and blasphemed the legal king, the anointed of the Most High, calling him *rebel*, whose title even Saul, his deadly enemy, acknowledged; and for this he deserved death according to the law. Still, it was well that David's wrath relented, and that he was stayed by the admonitory counsel of the noble and generous Abigail from shedding blood. "And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me. And blessed be thy counsel, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand." xxv. 32, 33.

David having departed to his own place, began to recall the whole circumstances of the event above narrated, and in connection therewith the cxli. Psalm appears to have been composed. He prays the Lord to pardon him for the evil purpose which he had rashly resolved to execute, and to preserve him from the like temptations in future. Internal evidence will show the combination of the Psalm with the facts above recited.

PS. CXLI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXXIV.

A SONG OF DAVID.

1. O Jehovah, I call upon thee: make haste to meet me;
Listen to my voice when I cry unto thee.
2. Let my prayer constitute incense before thee;
The lifting up of my hands be as the evening sacrifice.

David now stood in such a position to God as obliged him, according to the law, to bring a trespass-offering. Compare Lev. v. 4—16 with 1 Sam. xxv. 22. But he could not come to the place where the altar stood.* The sweet incense, brought upon the altar with every morning and evening sacrifice for a sweet smelling savour to Jehovah, was an emblem of the prayer of the saints. David, therefore, begging forgiveness of God for his oath which had not been performed, supplicates that his prayers may be accepted as incense before Him, and the lifting up of his hands (in supplication), accepted as the evening sacrifice, which was lifted up by the hands of the priests before it was put upon the altar.

Having begged pardon for the past, he prays in the following verse, that

* Indeed, it would seem that there had been no sacrificing since the slaughter of the priests of Nob, nor is it likely there was any till David came to the throne.

the Lord would grant more grace to him, and preserve him in future from uttering an oath unadvisedly—

3. O Jehovah, place a watch before my mouth,
A guard upon the door of my lips.

Both nouns שֹׁמֶרֶת (Shomerah) “a watch,” and נֹצֶרֶת (Notzerah) “a guard,” are feminine, and so put intentionally, because they are only figures, and mean that the Lord would so enrich his soul with saving grace as that *she*—the soul—would perform that service, viz.: be a watch to his mouth and a guard to his lips.

In the next verse, David prays in general, that such a temptation may not again occur, and that he may be preserved from coming any more in contact with such as wicked Nabal.

4. Allow not mine heart to incline to any evil matter,
To perpetrate unjust deeds on the workers of iniquity ;
And let me not partake of their dainties.

It will be observed that there are three things in this verse, to be preserved from which, David prays : 1st, That the Lord would not allow his heart to incline to any thing so evil as his resolution to destroy Nabal, as he had determined in the first heat of his resentment to do ; and that he might be kept from confirming so rash a purpose by an oath. Now in the first clause, the “evil matter” or “thing” refers to the oath only, from which he prayed that he might be preserved in future. 2d, That the Lord would preserve him from committing any such act as he doubtless would have perpetrated on Nabal and his house, but for the providential and timely interference of Abigail. An act like this he characterizes as “perpetrating unjust deeds on the workers of iniquity.” Though they be workers of iniquity he would leave them to the justice of God, and not meddle with them himself. 3d, Returning to the origin of the whole matter—which was his desire to partake of wicked Nabal’s dainties—he prays the Lord “not to allow his heart to incline (for this phrase at the beginning of the verse descends to the other clauses of it) to partake of their dainties”—to have any thing to do with them either good or bad.

David, in the next verse, alludes to Abigail, who, as an angel of God, intervened to preserve him from perpetrating a wicked deed.

5. Let the righteous rebuke me : O it is loving kindness !
Let them reprove me : O it is oil to the head !
My head shall not shake it down, be it ever so severe :
And I shall give them my prayer when they are in distress.

He was reproved, advised, overcome, and humbled by a woman. By her just and forcible argument Abigail convinced him that he was too rashly impelled by anger, and that he was in a wrong way. He accepted her counsel and reproof as a loving-kindness shown him, as a precious oil to his head, and he acknowledged it to be such when he exclaimed, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me : and blessed

be thy counsel, and blessed be thou, which has kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand." Such timely reprovers and faithful counsellors David prays the Lord to send him always, when he should be in the wrong way. He promises not to refuse their counsel, nor to be offended at their reproofs, but to love them for the same, and to pray for them, when they should be in distress.

While David was thus reflecting on the beneficial influence which a well-timed righteous rebuke has upon men, he remembers the recent occurrence of Saul coming into the cave of Engedi, when his men would have destroyed him in a moment but for his demonstrative restraining admonition. He also remembers how on that occasion the hardened monarch melted into tears at his just and reproofing expostulation, and exclaimed, "O my son David, thou art more righteous than I." In the next two verses therefore, looking upon his men, he says—

6. They would have thrust down their judge among the rocks ;
But they obeyed my words, because they were agreeable.
7. Though by him our bones are scattered at the grave's brim,
As the earth is cleaved by the ploughman.

When David remembered the cruelty of Saul, which had driven him and his men from their homes, and compelled them to seek their safety in deserts, and among rocks and caves of the earth, and remembered also the much innocent blood which he had shed at Nob and throughout the land ; and reflected, moreover, how much better it was, notwithstanding all this, that he had let him go in peace when he had him in his power—thus leaving him in the hand of the great Judge—than if he had allowed his men to destroy him ; and that it was by his agreeable words that he had prevailed with the latter to spare him,—when he considered all these things in connexion with the matter of Nabal and Abigail, the stronger became his conviction of the salutary influence which an opportune and wise rebuke produces. Indeed, these two verses are so critically difficult, that some writers, in searching out the particular occasion to which they are to be referred, have concluded that it must have been when Saul entered the cave of Engedi. This is correct in part ; but none of them have discovered the other part, viz., the occasion on which the whole Psalm was written ; and hence they fail in bringing out the entire meaning of these verses. There is also another difficulty in the way, lying in the plural number of the words נִשְׁמְטוּ (Nishmetu) and שֹׁפְטֵיהֶם (Shophthelem) ; and hence they fall into another

mistake in supposing that "Nishmetu" means "dismissed," i.e. "their judges have been dismissed," &c.—whereas, the plural pronoun refers to David's men, "their judge," "their act of throwing him down ;" and "Nishmetu" has the same signification here as in 2 Kings ix. 33, שְׁמִטָּה (Shimtuha)

"Throw her down." The נ in "Nishmetu" stands to signify, "they would have done it ;" but had not, for David prevailed with them, and they obeyed his words, because they were agreeable or tasteful.* Though

* For more satisfaction as to the somewhat strange construction of the word נִשְׁמְטוּ (Nishmetu) to signify the action (intended or real) in the plural, and to present also the passive in the singular, see the following words of similar construction in Mat. iii. 16, "Then they

they had to do with a robber who scattered and dispersed them into dens and caves, as the ploughman does scatter the earth which he turns up, still David saw that it was better to leave him in the hands of God, for the reason assigned in the following verse—

8. For unto thee, Jehovah, my God, mine eyes are directed ;
I have taken shelter in thee : my soul shall not be over-
thrown.
9. Guard me from the trap which they have put to entrap me,
And from the snares of the workers of iniquity.
10. Let the wicked fall altogether into their own net :
As for me, let me ever safely overpass.

Thus we have considered the above occurrences in David's history, and their blessed result to him. But the conduct of Nabal was not the less guilty. He had reviled and blasphemed the anointed of God, and treated his messengers with contumely and scorn. And although David was happily prevented from avenging himself with his own hand, yet that God to whom vengeance belongeth had observed all the circumstances, and in his own time and way had vindicated his servant's cause. "And it came to pass about ten days after, that the Lord smote Nabal, that he died. And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the Lord, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil ; for the Lord hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head." 1 Sam. xxv. 38, 39. In this fearful judgment on Nabal, David had a new proof of the faithfulness of God to his promises. The event must have been astonishing to his men also, who had witnessed what took place between their master and Saul at the cave, and convinced them still more that he was the object of Jehovah's special guardian care.

The lessons taught by these occurrences, both to David and his men, are fully recorded in Ps. xxxvii., which was composed after Nabal's death, and was sung by them all in a choir. The Psalm is alphabetical, although only

that feared the Lord נִדְּבָרִי (Nidberu) bespoke themselves," or "spoke among themselves," i.e. "one to," or "with another." According to grammatical rule, the נ of נִדְּבָרִי should make the plural passive, and should signify that these God-fearing men had been addressed by some other person not of their number ; but the explanation given in the verse, viz., "one with another," shows that the נ indicates their own action in the plural, and the passive to each one of them that was addressed during the intercourse which they held. Still more illustrative is Obadiah 8. אֵךְ נִחְפְּסוּ עֵשָׂו (Eych Nechpesu Esau), "How was Esau discovered," viz., by those mentioned in the preceding and succeeding verses ; or, "How did they discover Esau ?" Now, the plural of נִחְפְּסוּ stands not for Esau, for Esau is spoken of in the singular in the next clause, but it refers to those who were employed in searching for and finding him out in his hiding-places among the rocks. This is quite of the same construction with our word, for the two verbs "Nishmetu" and "Nechpesu" are exactly the same, and so are the nouns "Esau," and "judge." Our verse must therefore be rendered in one of the two ways, either, "Their judge would have been thrown, or thrust down among the rocks," or, "They would have thrust down their judge among the rocks." The certainty that they would have done so, makes the word stand as if it had actually been done— and this is peculiar to the Hebrew.

each second verse begins with a letter of the alphabet. Being performed in a regular choir, David, as the leader, opened each sentence by a phrase or verse beginning with a letter of the alphabet, and his choir responded the other part of the sentence. This is an order which is in use among Israel to this day in their synagogues, when the Psalms are read in public. The precentor chaunts one verse, and the public the next throughout. Though this mode does not suit in every Psalm, yet they have foolishly adopted it; but the arrangement of the one before us is admirably adapted for that purpose.

While this Psalm is alphabetical, it is still originally and properly divided into *four* parts. The First Part has exclusive reference to the judgment of Nabal, and contains the lessons which the children of God should thence derive, and also David's encouragement—verses 1—12. The Second Part treats principally of Saul and his associates, as arming themselves against David, and seeking to destroy him, and the latter's assurance of his deliverance and of the destruction of his enemies; it contains likewise some figures taken from the history of Nabal—verses 13—22. The Third Part is of a general character, and contains general instructions—verses 23—34. And the Fourth Part has relation again to the Psalmist's condition under Saul, and some figures and examples derived from Nabal's life. Verses 7, 20, 28, and 34 contain two verses each; and, although it is difficult to say when or how this mixture took place, yet it is evident from the alphabetical order in which this Psalm is composed. Each letter of the alphabet must have a verse for the argument contained in it, and one verse for the response of the chorus. The Psalm, therefore, must have 44 verses in all, according to the basis on which it is composed. The fact that the above-mentioned four verses are too large for forming one verse, shows that they have been erroneously inserted by those who divided the Scriptures into verses. The 28th does not only contain the matter of two verses, but it evidently wants a word for the verse that should begin with the Hebrew letter **ע** (ain). A very ancient manuscript which the author of this book had the privilege of using in his father's house, and from which he was taught the Psalms by heart, contains in the passage referred to, the additional word **עבדיו** (Avadove), "His servants," as the beginning of the verse which opens with the letter **ע**. As this word makes no difference in the sense or sentiment of the passage, while it serves to restore it to order, we take the liberty of introducing it here, as will be seen by the reader.

PS. XXXVII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXXV.

לְדָוִד, A PSALM OF DAVID.

PART FIRST.

DAVID.

- ⲛ 1. Be not inflamed against malefactors;
 Envyy not the workers of iniquity.

CHORUS' REPLY.

2. For like the grass they shall suddenly be cut down ;
And like the green herbage they shall soon wither.

DAVID.

- ב 3. Trust in Jehovah, and do good ;
Rest quietly in the land, and feed upon faithfulness.

CHORUS' REPLY.

4. Place also thy delight in Jehovah,
And he shall grant thee thy heart's desire.

DAVID.

- ג 5. Roll thy course upon Jehovah ;
Depend also on him, that he will promote it.

CHORUS' REPLY.

6. And he shall manifest thy righteousness as the light,
And thy justification as the noon-day.

DAVID.

- ד 7. Wait patiently for Jehovah,
And reduplicate thy plaintive supplication to him.

CHORUS' REPLY.

8. Be not inflamed against him that prospereth in his course,
Against a man that doth frame wicked devices.

DAVID.

- ה 9. Cease from anger, and relinquish wrath ;
Thou canst not be inflamed without making it worse.

CHORUS' REPLY.

10. For the malefactors shall be utterly cut off,
But those whose hope is Jehovah shall inherit the land.

DAVID.

- ו 11. Yet a little while and the wicked is gone,
Thou mayest diligently search at his place, but he is no more.

CHORUS' REPLY.

12. But the meek shall inherit the land,
And be delighted with abundance of peace.

The basis on which this Psalm is constructed is most interesting and sublime. David opens each argument with a letter of the alphabet; but the verse in which he speaks is always divided into two parts, and the argument it contains is divided along with the verse into two branches. The reply of the chorus observes the same order, replying regularly to each part of the argument. It either gives the reason to the argument, or only strengthens it by additional force. There are a few exceptions easily to be noticed.

David derived two lessons from his recent experience; 1st, Not to be inflamed to wrath against the Nabals of this world when they treat us wrongfully, but to leave vengeance in the hand of the Great Judge; 2d, Not to envy them when we see them flourish for a time, for their prosperity will soon come to an end. In the first verse we find these two branches of the argument; 1st, Be not inflamed against malefactors; 2d, Envy not the workers of iniquity. In the second verse the chorus' reply the reason likewise in two branches; 1st, "For like the grass they shall suddenly be cut down," *i.e.*, the riper they are, and the higher they flourish, the sooner the Lord shall cut them down as he did Nabal; hence there is no place for thy wrath; 2d, "Like the green herbage they shall soon wither;" *i.e.*, the greener they grow, the sooner they shall fade and wither; hence thou hast no reason to envy them. The same order is observed in verses 3 and 4, only that the chorus' reply is not the reason, but additional force. Verse 5. "Roll thy course upon Jehovah." דַּרְכֶּךָ (Darkecha) here means, "all thy concerns," *i.e.*, all things which we meet on our journey through life, if they are too difficult for us, if we bow under them as under a heavy burden, then גֹּל עַל יְהוָה (Gol al Jehovah), roll them upon Jehovah, "upon stronger shoulders than thine own, and depend on him, and he will promote it." Rest at ease, "even to old age, to thy grey hair, he will bear, and he will deliver." Trust in him.

Verse 7. "And reduplicate thy plaintive supplications to him." This is the literal meaning of the words יְהִיחֹהֵל לִי (Vehithchelel Lo); the compound verb is derived from חָל (Chal), which signifies, "ardent supplication," or "touching, plaintive entreaties." (See Ex. xxxii. 11; Ps. cxix. 5; 2 Kings v. 3. "Let my lord supplicate before the prophet that is in Samaria," Job xi. 19.) Hence the compound יְהִיחֹהֵל (Hitheholel), signifying a continuance, or reduplication, of the plaintive supplication. This verse stands by itself, and verse 8 in our version (which was erroneously united to it at some time or other) contains the response of the chorus as the observed order throughout the Psalm. Verse 9. David says, "Cease from anger, and relinquish wrath;" giving this as his reason, *viz.*, because men can never be kindled with wrath but to their own loss, and matters will grow worse by it instead of being made better. לֹא תִתְחַר (Lo Tithchar), "Thou canst not be inflamed" אַךְ לְהָרַע (Ach Leharea), "but to make it worse," or, "without making it worse."

PART SECOND.

DAVID.

- י 13. The wicked plotteth against the righteous,
He gnashes his teeth at him.

CHORUS' REPLY.

14. The Lord laugheth at him, for he seeth that his day is setting.

DAVID.

- י 15. The wicked have drawn the sword, and bent their bow,
To fell the poor and defenceless,
To butcher those that walk upright.

CHORUS' REPLY.

16. Their sword shall pierce their own heart,
And their bows shall be broken.

DAVID.

- י 17. The few that are for the righteous
Are better than the vast multitudes of the wicked.

CHORUS' REPLY.

18. For the arms of the wicked shall be broken,
But the Supporter of the righteous is Jehovah.

DAVID.

- י 19. Jehovah valueth the days of the upright,
And their heritage shall continue for ever.

CHORUS' REPLY.

20. They shall not be confounded in the time of adversity,
And in the days of famine they shall be well supplied.

DAVID.

- י 21. For the wicked shall perish, and Jehovah's enemies
Shall be like the enkindled battering rams.

CHORUS' REPLY.

22. They are consumed in the smoke ! they are consumed.

The reader will observe that with the 12th verse the argument ended,

which had an exclusive reference to the lessons which David derived from the occurrences connected with the history of Nabal and his fearful end. But the second part of the Psalm, beginning with verse 13th, hath an exclusive reference to Saul, the yet living and yet dangerous enemy. David therefore opens this part by saying, "The wicked plotteth against the righteous, and gnasheth at him with his teeth, but the chorus replies, "Jehovah laughs at him, for he seeth **כִּי יָבֹא יוֹמוֹ** (Ki yavo yomo) that his day is setting." The same words are used here as to denote the setting of the sun. Jehovah mocks the wicked who maketh preparations to destroy the righteous, for he sees that before he would have time to execute his malicious design, his day shall suddenly set, and he shall be plunged into an eternity of darkness and woe. For the literal fulfilment of verse 16th, in the death of Saul, see 1 Sam. xxxi. 4. His sword entered his own heart (compare also 2 Sam. i. 27.) Inasmuch as the whole of the second part of this Psalm, extending from the 13th to the 22d verse, refers exclusively to Saul and his associates as standing in direct opposition to the righteous and innocent David, the latter says in verse 17, that "The few that are for the righteous," *i. e.*, the few men who were with him, "Are better than the vast multitudes of the wicked," *i. e.*, the vast armies of the wicked men that were with the wicked Saul; and for which the chorus responds the reason, "For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but the Supporter of the righteous is Jehovah." David, after having stated in verses 19 and 20 his hope in the Lord, who "valueth the days of the upright," and that therefore their heritage should be everlasting, and that in time of adversity the Lord would preserve them, and provide richly for them in famine, predicts in verse 21st the destruction of Saul and his associates, "For the wicked shall perish, and Jehovah's enemies **כִּיקָד כָּרִים** (Kiyekod Karim), like enkindled battering-rams," *i. e.*, the wicked are like battering-rams which are brought against the walls of a fortification; they come against the righteous, whose fortification is God, they are kindled by His fire (these battering-rams were often kindled and set on fire.) The chorus therefore replies triumphantly, "They are consumed in the smoke; they are consumed." Many interpretations of the above two words have been given by commentators. Some of them make additions here of their own, but all to no purpose. As we have put it, the reading is only altered by substituting a **ך** for a **ק** in the word **יָקָד**, for the meaning of which see Isa. x. 16, where it occurs three times. The meaning of **כָּרִים** see in Ezek. iv. 2; xxi. 22. What letters are easier changed than **ך** and **ק**? And for the fulfilment of this prediction regarding Saul, see 1 Sam. xxxi. 12.

PART THIRD.

DAVID.

- ל 23. The wicked borroweth, and payeth not,
But the righteous is compassionate and lendeth.

CHORUS' REPLY.

24. For His blessed ones shall inherit the land,
But His accursed ones shall be cut off.

DAVID.

25. By Jehovah are the steps of a man directed,
When he taketh pleasure in his ways.

CHORUS' REPLY.

26. Even when he falleth, he is not cast down violently,
For Jehovah is the support of his hand.

DAVID.

27. I was a boy, and am now growing old,
And I have not yet seen a righteous man forsaken,
Nor his children begging bread.

CHORUS' REPLY.

28. All his days he exerciseth compassionate generosity, and
lendeth,
Still his children are left blessed with plenty.

DAVID.

29. Turn away from evil, and do good, and rest in quietness
forever.

CHORUS' REPLY.

30. For Jehovah loveth justice, and he will never forsake his
devoted ones.

DAVID.

31. His servants are preserved for ever,
But the posterity of the wicked is cut off.

CHORUS' REPLY.

32. The righteous shall inherit the land,
And dwell in peace for ever therein.

DAVID.

33. The mouth of the righteous uttereth wisdom,
And his tongue speaketh what is just.

CHORUS' REPLY.

34. The instructions of his God are in his heart—
His footsteps shall never slide.

The third part of this Psalm, extending from the 23d to the 34th verse inclusive, is of a general character, intended for instruction; still some of its figures are taken from the recent experience of the Psalmist. "The wicked borroweth and payeth not;" *i.e.* he receives abundance from God, but feels no gratitude—he takes from men, but is never thankful; such was Nabal. But the unrestricted compassion of God, and the generosity of the righteous, never fade. Verse 25. The argument here is, that so long as a man walks in the right way in which Jehovah takes pleasure, there is no fear but that the Lord will direct his steps, and enable him to go on. Verse 26. Even when the righteous falls, **לֹא יִפֹּט** (Lo yutal) "he is not cast down violently;" *i.e.* he is not like the wicked who are thrust down by the Lord never to rise again; but the righteous, though he is allowed sometimes to slip, still, as Jehovah supports him by his hand, or, is the supporter of his hand (the figure is that of a man who is supported by the arm of another being extended to him), will soon rise again. See the meaning of **יִפֹּט** (Yutal) in Isa. xxii. 17, xl. 15. What is said in verse 27 by no means implies that David was old when he wrote this, for the word **זָקֵן** (Zaken) is not itself expressive of time, but is always accompanied with another word, which denotes this; as in Gen. xviii. 11, **בָּאִים בַּיָּמִים** (Baim Bayamim), is what expresses "old age." "They were advanced in years," but not the **זָקֵנִים** (Yekenim), which preceded it (comp. Gen. xxiv. 1; 1 Kings i. 1; 1 Chron. xxiii. 1); but the **זָקֵן** (Zaken) is often merely opposed to **נָעַר** (Naar), a young boy, and means one advancing to manhood. Hence **זָקֵן וְנָעַר** (Zaken u-Na'ar), Esther iii. 13; Lam. ii. 21; in both which places it signifies, not merely "boys and very old men," but "children and grown-up men," and also old men. So in our verse David means to say, that he was a boy once, but now he was a grown-up man, &c. The 30th verse in this Psalm was also erroneously made up (as before explained) of two verses, by those who, in a later period, divided the Scriptures into chapters and verses. The whole order of the Psalm shows this. But in verse 30 a whole word is wanting, with which the verse that should open with the letter **ע** must begin. This we have seen in a manuscript of the Psalms to be **עַבְדִּי** "His servant," and we introduce it here to open verse 31.

PART FOURTH.

DAVID.

- צ 35. The wicked lurketh for the righteous, and contriveth to slay him:

CHORUS' REPLY.

36. Jehovah will not leave him into his hand,
Nor condemn him when he is judged.

DAVID.

37. Wait for Jehovah, and keep in his way,
And he shall exalt thee to inherit the land.

CHORUS' REPLY.

38. Thou shalt also behold the extirpation of the wicked.

DAVID.

39. I have seen a wicked man, formidable,
Expanding himself like a flourishing young cedar :

CHORUS' REPLY.

40. But he passed away, and behold, he is no more,
And I diligently searched for him, but he was not found :

DAVID.

41. Keep thyself perfect, and value uprightness ;
For there is a futurity to the peaceful man.

CHORUS' REPLY.

42. But the transgressors are extirpated altogether.
The futurity of the wicked is cut off.

DAVID.

43. The salvation of the righteous cometh from Jehovah,
Who is their high fortress in time of distress.

CHORUS' REPLY.

44. And Jehovah shall help them and deliver them ;
He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them ;
For they have sought refuge in him.

The fourth part of this Psalm begins exactly like the second. The reference is to Saul looking out to slay David ; but the chorus responds, Jehovah is stronger, and He will not let him fall into his power. Verses 39 and 40 refer to Nabal, as an illustration of the whole. The second clause of verse 40 was likely repeated by one of the band ; hence it is in the singular. The two concluding verses are so sublime that we cannot find words to praise them.

After the death of Nabal, David sent messengers to Abigail, who had been introduced to him in so extraordinary a manner, for the purpose of asking her in marriage. To this proposal she humbly assented, and thereupon became his wife. David had taken also to wife Abinoam of Jezreel, whom he espoused in room of Michal, Saul's daughter, who was taken from him by her father, and given to Phalti the son of Laish, a native of Gallim.

But David had yet some severe trials to undergo before the dawn of his future day. Once more was Saul's insincerity manifested; for having received fresh information from the Ziphite spies that David had again taken refuge in their neighbourhood, he broke his oath, and hunted for him with three thousand chosen men in the wilderness of Ziph. And once more was opportunity afforded to David of taking his enemy's life, but he magnanimously spared him. Having along with Abishai, his sister's son, silently entered Saul's camp by night when he was asleep, the latter proposed instantly to destroy him; but David said, "Destroy him not, for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless? . . . As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed; but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go." 1 Sam. xxvi. 6—11. Thus he evinced not only his dependence on God and his fear of him, but also his generous and forgiving disposition. But from the top of the opposite hill whither he retired, he administered a severe and cutting rebuke in a loud voice which Saul soon recognized. Again did the king thank his generous benefactor, and acknowledge his crime; and he concluded with these words, "Blessed be thou, my son David; thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail." xxvi. 25.

When Saul withdrew, David began to reflect on his painful situation. He saw the falsehood and wickedness of the king, and the instability of his perverted mind. Every corner even of the wilderness had been searched by spies in order to his being seized; David therefore "said in his heart, **עָתָה אֶסָּפֶה** (Atah Esaphe) I shall now be apprehended (this is erroneously rendered, 'I shall perish,' but means 'be apprehended or seized') one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines" xxvii. 1. Accordingly he betook himself thither with his wives, and with his men and their households. Philistia had now another king, named Achish like the former, son of Maach, and reigned at Gath. King Achish not only received them hospitably (though with the wicked design to hurt Israel), but at David's request for some other place than the royal city in which to dwell, appointed them the town of Ziklag as their residence and possession. In Ziklag, which had once belonged to the tribe of Simeon, but had been taken from them by the Philistines, David and his men lived for a considerable time. They were indebted for their subsistence to the successful sallies which they occasionally made against the remainder of Amalekites, Geshurites, and other Canaanitish nations, which were to be extirpated by the command of God. When Saul heard that David had fled to Philistia, he sought no more after him.

INTRODUCTION TO PS. CXIX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXXVI.

David was now an exile from home and country, and a sojourner among an idolatrous people who were the deadly foes of Israel. How grieving and mortifying this must have been to him may be learned from the following portion of his address to Saul on the occasion of their last meeting, when he must have determined on leaving Judea because of him: "Now, therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the Lord have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering; but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods." xxvi. 19. David was now beyond reach of danger from the hand of Saul, but he was exposed to spiritual danger, which was far worse. He was now secure from the snares which had been so often laid for him in Judea, but he was bereaved of the privileges which he had there enjoyed, and beset with the spiritual snares of heathenism and idolatry. His only defence (but it was a strong one) against such danger—against the baneful influences and impressions arising from contact with the idolatrous society around him—against the dissipation of mind which the nature of his occupation during his sojourn at Ziklag exposed him to—was, the law of his God, in its instructions how to live a holy life, and its directions how to maintain a close walk with God; and in its types and shadows of good things to come, which gave him a clear knowledge of the ways of God, and of his free mercy and grace towards the children of men in *their substance*, the great Antitype, who was to complete human redemption and salvation, not in ceremony and figure, but in reality and perfection. In his spiritually dangerous circumstances, David specially needed to have the law of God in his heart—needed to wrap himself, as it were, in Jehovah's instructions and statutes, and counsels to the pilgrim Zion-ward—to keep His fear, and love, and warnings continually before his eyes—to lie down and rise up, to go out and come in, with the word of God in his mouth—and to have for his constant motto, God, and not the world; Eternity, and not time; Righteousness, and not the treasures of injustice and violence; Holiness, and not pollution; Jehovah the Holy One of Israel, and not idols or the mighty of earth; Everlasting glory in heaven for righteousness; Endless punishment in hell for sin. Such needed to be David's panoply, and such his motto, in the idolatrous land of Philistia.

David's harp was by no means silent in his exile. He composed various Psalms during that period, as we shall afterwards see; but the most glorious of them is that crystal ocean of instruction in righteousness—of doctrine and regulation—of spiritual elevation and depression—of blessed communion and gracious experience—of piety and devotion—of holiness and godly fear—of poetical sublimity and elegance of diction,—that cyclopædia of celestial information, the cxix.

Besides the additional internal evidence which the reader will discover for himself in many parts of this Psalm, of its having been composed by David during his exile in Philistia, we advance here some general proofs:

1st, The absence throughout the Psalm of all allusion to his residence in Judea, to him taking an active part in the services of the tabernacle, to the ark, the cherubim, the priest, and the altar, and sacrifice, (and his loud

complaints of being deprived of covenant privileges, as we shall see, as we pass along), is conclusive evidence that David was excluded from the use and enjoyment of them during its composition; and the lengthened period which the writing of it must have occupied, shows, that it is to the time of his exile in Philistia its date must be assigned.

2d; The entire want of intimation, or even hint, that David was king at the time, shows that it must have been composed before he was advanced to the throne; and no other time was more fit and appropriate than the above.

3d, If the 19th verse be literally translated, it reads, "I am a stranger in the land; hide not from me thy commandments." On comparing this verse with the above introductory remarks, it will be apparent that it must refer to him as being a stranger in Philistia, and therefore as standing in great need of Jehovah's instruction and commandments.

4th, Verses 22, 28, 61, 84, 87, 107, 121, 134, 141, 153, 154, 157, 161, 170, 171, and 176, distinctly show that the Psalm must have been written when its author was in Philistia, for although he was not at the time exposed to danger from Saul immediately and directly, yet he was enduring the effects of his persecution, and his life was still in jeopardy; besides which, he was liable to obloquy and persecution at the hands of the jealous Philistines. In these verses he begs the Lord to judge his enemies, and to deliver him from the condition of danger and misery which he still was in. He could not have written them as a king on his throne, but as a poor exile, waiting for the fulfilment of Jehovah's promises. In verse 108th, he says, "Accept, I beseech thee, the free-will offerings of my month;" words which show that he had it not in his power to bring real free-will offerings, because he was not in the land where were the tabernacle and altar.*

But the Psalm from beginning to end speaks for itself, and manifests that in Philistia alone it was written. It was David's spiritual bulwark against the temptations to which he was there exposed. In it we see him enveloping his soul, as if in the laws, the commandments, the statutes, and the testimonies of God. In it he evinces his ardent devotion to God's law, and his love to his ways, and therefore pleads the fulfilment of the promise made to him by Samuel, and confirmed by the Oracle. In it he breathes longing desires for the termination of his exile, for his restoration to his country and to the privileges of the covenant-people; and that he might be enabled to accomplish the Lord's purposes by him—the re-establishing of the tabernacle and its services, and the priesthood and Levitical order; and that he might be permitted to celebrate Jehovah's ordinances as they had been instituted by Him.

The Psalm is divided into twenty-two parts or paragraphs, according to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Each part consists of eight verses, and each verse begins with a letter of the alphabet according to its order. Anything like a Christian application of each of the verses in succession would of itself make up a large volume; and therefore we limit our exposition simply to the illustration of the text, and to the explanation of

* It would be of little avail to show, how ill-founded is the opinion of those who maintain that this Psalm was not written by David at all. And to prove, on the other hand, that he is the author of it, would be akin to an attempt to prove that John Knox was John Knox, and not Martin Luther.

the different rendering which we give of some of its words and phrases, commending our readers to the guidance and instruction of the Holy Spirit, the Divine Teacher and Leader of all the children of God.

PS. CXIX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXXVI.

⚔ PART FIRST.

1. Happy are the faithful pilgrims,
Who walk along by Jehovah's instructions.
2. Happy are the observers of his testimonies,
When inquiring for him with all the heart.
3. These also will commit no blunder,
When walking in his ways.
4. Thou hast commanded that thy statutes should be strictly
observed.
5. O that my ways were directed to the observance of thy
ordinances!
6. Then shall I not be ashamed,
When I examine thoroughly all thy commandments.
7. I shall praise thee with uprightness of heart,
When I have learned thy just judgments.
8. I will observe thine ordinances;
Forsake me not so exceedingly long.

The principal figure in this Psalm is that of a pilgrim, whose journey, in pressing towards the mark, leads him through a desert where there is no regular road. There is one, however, who can give instructions to the pilgrim to keep in a certain line, by observing always, as he passes along, some monuments, some heaps, some guide-posts, which, if kept strictly in view, will certainly lead him to the very mark towards which he hastens. The pilgrim here is the Old Testament saint, travelling through the wilderness of this world towards heaven. Jehovah has given him instructions in His תּוֹרָה (Torah), in His law, or literally, "Book of instruction."

Thus David says, "Happy are תְּמִימֵי דָרֶךְ (Temimey Darech), literally, "the perfect in the journey," or, "the earnest and upright travellers." דָּרֶךְ (Darech) here is not a noun to signify "way," but stands as a verb joined with תְּמִימֵי (Temimey), and the import of both is, to designate the "earnest and faithful pilgrims who have nothing else before them, but are set with all their energy and strength to pursue their journey by pressing forward. These faithful and earnest pilgrims, says David, are happy, because they "walk along by Jehovah's instructions." But in walking by Jehovah's instructions, the pilgrims must keep in mind the guide-posts, the monuments, which are the עֵדוּת (Eyduth) "testimonies," and which signify the Old Testament types, appointed to show forth something beyond themselves, to foreshadow glorious things to come, and testify to the certainty of their coming. (See our exposition on Ps. xix., in this

book Ps. vi., verse 7.) These are the testimonies or monuments of which David speaks in verse 2. They were to be strictly observed by the Old Testament pilgrim saint, when he went along inquiring for Jehovah; for they were the principal guide-posts in the "schoolmaster's" instruction, to lead his pilgrims to the place of their destiny (Christ). Had they left out these monuments, then they would have lost themselves in the wilderness. Verse 2. "Happy are the observers of his testimonies when inquiring for Him with all the heart." As they pass along in the wilderness, inquiring, or searching for their mark, they are to remember these testimonies, for they were put there for the very purpose of directing them in their way and keeping them from erring from and losing the right line. Of such faithful pilgrims David says, in verse 3, that "they will commit no blunder," or will never fail or come short of their undertaking, so long as they walk in his ways, *i.e.*, all the time of their pilgrimage; but that they will go on from strength to strength until they arrive at the place of their destiny—the celestial residence of their God and Saviour.

David has thus laid the foundation of the magnificent structure of this Psalm in the first three verses, by showing how the Old Testament pilgrims were to be led towards heaven. But in the next three verses, he complains that in his present state in Philistia, he was deprived of the exercise of these typical ceremonies—was precluded from observing those holy ordinances which were so essential to the "faithful pilgrims," and were such unailing guide-posts in the spiritual journey of saints. Verse 4. "Thou hast commanded that thy statutes should be strictly observed." The word פְּקֻדֵּי (Pikudey), rendered here "statutes," means the "appointments of God and his charges," committed to Israel as the depositaries of the Divine Oracles. These they were commanded שְׁמֹר מִצְוֹת (Lishmor Meod) to observe unceasingly, or very strictly. But then, how could David observe these when he was prevented from observing the ordinances of God in his tabernacle, in which these statutes or appointments chiefly consisted? He therefore prays (verse 5), "O that my ways were directed to the observance of thy ordinances!" *i.e.*, "O that thou wouldest restore me to the holy land—to the tabernacle and altar, where I could join my brethren in the eating of the passover—in the offering of sacrifices—in the celebration of the ceremonies of the feast and Sabbath days!" Such observances were termed חֻקִּים (Chukim), "ordinances," which were to be celebrated at certain times in Judea (see Ex. xii. 17—43, xiii. 10; Lev. xxiii. 31, 41, xxiv. 3, 9, &c., &c.) But what would David obtain in having the privilege of celebrating and exercising them? The answer follows in verse 6, "Then shall I not be ashamed when I examine thoroughly all thy commandments." In his present situation he could not attend the ordinances of God; and therefore he blushed when he examined the commandments, and found how many of the most important ones he was not able to fulfil; hence he says that when the Lord would so direct his ways as that he would be restored to the celebration of them, he would not be any more ashamed when examining *all* the commandments. Verse 7. "I shall praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I have learned (received intelligence of) thy just judgments" (on his enemies who had deprived him of the above privileges.) Verse 8. "I will observe thine ordinances; for-sake me not עֲדָה מִצְוֹת (Ad Meod), so very, or exceedingly long," *i.e.*, let

these my privations of thy ordinances not continue very long, but restore me soon again.

ב PART SECOND.

9. Wherewithal can a youth make clear his path ?
By keeping straightway according to thy Word.
10. I inquired for thee with all my heart ;
Let me not stray from thy commandments.
11. In my heart have I stored up thy words,
In order that I may not sin against thee.
12. Blessed art thou, O Jehovah ; train me in thy ordinances.
13. With my lips I enumerated all the orders of thy mouth.
14. In the way of thy testimonies have I rejoiced,
More than in all riches.
15. When I meditate on thy statutes,
Then I perceive distinctly all thy ways.
16. In thy ordinances I shall be greatly delighted ;
I will not forget thy word.

The figure in the second Part is still the same as in the first ; the pilgrim is seeking the highroad that leads to the celestial city—the residence of the God of Israel. But while the first opens with a description of the happiness of experienced saints, who are in the highroad, and keeping by the guide-posts, the “testimonies ;” the second begins with the question, how the youth, the inexperienced, can make clear his way ? can ascertain that he is in the right **אֶרֶץ** (Orach) highroad, or principal path ? to which the answer is, by keeping straightway, or strictly, or according to, Jehovah’s revealed word, which is the only sure guide and infallible rule to bring him into the highroad to heaven. This David had done from his earliest youth ; he had inquired, and searched, and diligently sought Jehovah in his revealed Word. Verse 10. “I inquired for thee with my whole heart” (see verse 2) ; and he therefore pleads for further directions from God, “Let me not stray from thy commandments,” *i.e.*, seeing I have adopted the right plan, aid me therefore in my pilgrimage. He had not only searched in the Word of God from his earliest days ; but he had also committed it to memory—he had engraved the holy oracles, **אִמְרֹתֶיךָ** (Imrathecha), all the branches of Jehovah’s orders, statutes, precepts, rules, and commandments (*Tà λόγια σου*. LXX.) on the table of his heart, and had stored them up there. For (verse 11) “In my heart have I stored up thy words (all thy sayings, *i.e.*, thy revealed oracles), in order that I may not sin against thee.” In verse 12 he blesses the Lord for what he had already enabled him to do, and prays for the future that Jehovah might restore him to the celebration of his ordinances, and that thus he might be trained in their exercise and import. Compare exposition of verse 5. Having committed the Word of God to memory in his early days, he says (verse 13), that, “with his lips he could enumerate all the orders, *i.e.*, the institutions, appointments, and all the Mosaic order that proceeded from Jehovah’s mouth. In the last three verses he gives us very important

statements of his experience. Verse 14. "In the way of thy testimonies," *i.e.*, in the way in which I was guided by thy testimonies—in the mysteries they revealed to me—the glorious things which they foreshadow and typify, and to which they open the way (see exposition of verse 2), in these things, says David, "have I rejoiced more than in all riches." Verse 15. In reference to the most mysterious and wonderful of the ways of Jehovah in his sanctuary, being the plan of human redemption, which was foreshadowed in the statutes given in charge to Israel of old (see exposition of verse 4), David says, in verse 15, "When I meditate on thy statutes, then I perceive *distinctly* all thy ways," or, "then I penetrate, or inspect, all thy ways," (the verb "Veabitah" is very comprehensive.) But as in verses 5 and 8 of the former part, David displayed a special longing for Jehovah's ordinances, so in verse 16 he closes the second part in these words, "In thy ordinances I shall be greatly delighted; I will not, or shall not, forget thy word." This "word" here refers to the promise made to David (compare exposition of Ps. lvi., or chronologically Ps. xii., verses 4 and 10.)

2 PART THIRD.

17. Make a rich reward unto thy servant—
Let me live and keep thy words.
18. Open mine eyes that I may penetrate the hidden mysteries of thy law.
19. I am a stranger in the land;
Conceal not thy commandments from me.
20. My soul breaketh in continual languishing for thy judgments;
21. When thou shalt have rebuked the accursed enticers,
Who wander from thy commandments.
22. Remove from me reproach and contempt,
When thy testimonies I have observed.
23. Even when princes sat conversing with me,
Thy servant meditated on thy ordinances.
24. Thy testimonies also are my greatest delight—yea, my counsellors.

In verse 14, David rejoices in the way of Jehovah's testimonies more than in all riches; and as there is a reward to the righteous even in time, he chooses that reward to be neither gold nor any of the precious things of this world, but says, verse 17, "Make a rich reward unto thy servant," and of what should it consist? "Let me live and keep," or observe, "thy words." Such was the choice of David, and such was that of Solomon his son, at first (see 1 Kings iii. 5—14), but the latter came short of it in his old age. Oh, may such be our choice, to live not to the world, but to the *Word*, which was made flesh and bled for us on Golgotha's cross. Verse 18. In our days, alas! the bitter enemies of Old Testament revelation make it their aim to devastate it by stripping it of its excellencies, and covering it with the dark cloak of their carnal mindedness, maintaining that there are no mysteries in God's law—no hidden wonders embodied in

the ceremonies of the tabernacle, and no brightness in the shadows, nor in the statutes, ordinances, and testimonies of Old Testament Scripture. But David's estimate was far otherwise, and therefore he says, "Open mine eyes"—enlighten them by thy Spirit—"that I may penetrate or perceive distinctly נִפְלְאוֹת (Niphlaoth), the hidden mysteries or concealed wonders of thy law." With his eyes thus opened by the Holy Spirit, he could see that that law was full of hidden mysteries—of future glorious wonders—of divine and spiritual significance. When Jesus opened the eyes and understanding of his disciples on the road to Emmaus, they saw the same; and if we would so perceive, see, and understand, let us pray with the Psalmist, גַּל עֵינַי (Gal Eynay), "Open our eyes, that we may penetrate the hidden mysteries of thy law." In verse 19 he shows how much need he had for what he prayed for in the former verse; he was a *stranger* in Philistia, in an idolatrous country, unable to practise all Jehovah's commandments and testimonies; and therefore the only thing he could do was to reflect on them in their glory and importance, and keep them before his eyes, as a shield against temptation. Verse 20. "My soul breaketh in continual languishing for thy judgments, *i. e.*, for God's judgments on his enemies, who had driven him away from the enjoyment of the privileges of the covenant. Thus David languished for the time mentioned in the following verse, "When thou shalt have rebuked זָדִים וְאַרְרִים (Zaydim Arurim), the accursed enticers," or the "stripped rebels." These words signify such wicked men as not only do not fulfil the law themselves, but prevent others from doing so. As the doers of the law were called blessed, so were those called accursed, stripped from good works and from the reward of them; they were abandoned ones (see Deut. xi. 29; xxvii. 12, 26; Josh. viii. 30—35.) They are further described as wandering from Jehovah's commandments. When such were punished and removed from the land, then David would be restored; and thus the reproach and contempt with which they had treated him would be wiped away, and he would be no more a stranger in an idolatrous land, no more a stranger to the sanctuary. In verse 23, he describes the delight he had in meditating on Jehovah's sanctuary and its ordinances, even when he conversed with princes. The tabernacle, altar, and sacrifices, yea, the hidden mysteries he discovered in them, were all his desire and joy. Verse 24. "Thy testimonies also are my greatest delight—yea, my counsellors," *i. e.*, my guides on my pilgrimage—my conductors through the wilderness of this world to the heavenly country. (See exposition of verse 2.)

7 PART FOURTH.

25. My soul cleaveth to the dust ;
O quicken me according to thy promise.
26. I have summed up my wanderings, in which thou hast afflicted me ;
O train me now in thy ordinances.
27. Make me understand the way of thy statutes,
That I may muse on thy mysterious wonders :

28. My soul melteth by reason of wailing ;
Revive me according to thy promise.
29. The way of falsehood remove from me,
And favour me with thy instructions.
30. The way of truth have I chosen ;
Thy judgments I have set before me.
31. I am attached to thy testimonies—
O let me not be put to shame.
32. I shall run along the path of thy commandments,
When thou hast once enlarged my heart.

David had received glorious promises from his God by the prophet Samuel. He had also been favoured with some special revelations by the Spirit. (See Ps. lvi., or in this book Ps. xii., verses 4 and 10, and exposition.) Remembering promises, he prays Jehovah, in verse 25, to quicken him, for his soul cleaved to the dust ; descriptive of weariness, heaviness, and fainting. But he knew also that a certain time was appointed for his wanderings and humiliation, and when these terminated, deliverance would come. As he says in verse 8 of the Psalm just referred to, "When thou hast once summed up my wanderings," &c. So he says here, verse 26, that he had summed, or recounted, or re-considered, his wanderings, in which the Lord had sore afflicted and humbled him ; and he therefore prays for the promised deliverance—that now the Lord would restore him again, and begin to train him in His ordinances. In verse 27 we have another indication of his faith, that there was something far more deeply significant and expressive in the types than the mere ceremonial observances connected with them : "Make me understand," says he, "the way of thy statutes." What else can he mean by *the way*, but their typical signification—their Antitype, to lead to whom they were instituted ? and then follows, "that I may muse, or earnestly meditate בְּנִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ (Beniphleothecha), on thy mysterious wonders," or hidden mysteries. What mean these but the mysteries of salvation by the Divine Saviour, of whom all these statutes of the law of God were the most expressive types ? After recording, in the four following verses, his grief of soul because of the still miserable state he was in—his longing for God and His Word—his choice of the good and abhorrence of the evil, he closes this part with these words, "I shall run along the path, or line, of thy commandments, when thou hast once enlarged my heart," *i.e.* when my present calamities and oppressive burdens are removed—when I am restored to country and privileges, then shall I, as a faithful pilgrim, keep straight way according to the instructions and guidance of thy holy word.

⌒ PART FIFTH.

33. Show me, O Jehovah, the way to thy ordinances,
And I will pursue it unto the end.
34. Instruct me how to observe thy law,
And I will keep it with all my heart.

35. Make me to tread in the path of thy commandments,
For in this I delight.
36. Incline my heart to thy testimonies,
And not to covetousness.
37. Turn mine eyes from straying in a wrong direction ;
Quicken me in thy way.
38. Accomplish thy promise unto thy servant,
Who is devoted to thy fear.
39. Remove from me my dreaded reproach,
For thy judgments are good.
40. Behold how I languish for thy statutes !
Quicken me for thy righteousness' sake.

In this part, as in the former, we see the Psalmist longing after Jehovah's sanctuary, from the exercises of which he was then excluded. The first three verses contain an earnest plea that He would restore him to these privileges—would show him the way to His ordinances—would instruct him how to observe the law—and would make him tread, or walk on, in the path of his commandments ; all which presuppose a restoration to his own country, as well as peace and safety when there. In verse 36 there is a very appropriate allusion to the mode of life which David was then obliged to lead—he and his men having to subsist on the spoil which they gathered from the Amalekites and other Canaanitish nations : “ Incline my heart to thy testimonies, and not to covetousness,” or, greedy gain, *i.e.* the spoil got only with much anxiety and trouble. He would be far more delighted in spending that activity in the service of God. As he was exposed to great spiritual danger from the circumstances which he was now in, he prays the Lord, in verse 37, to turn away his eyes from, or to prevent them from straying into, a wrong direction. The literal meaning of the words מֵרָחוֹת לִשׁוֹן (Meroroth Shav) is, “from looking falsely.”

But, as the idea throughout the Psalm is that of a pilgrim in a vast desert, walking on according to certain rules and directions given him by a friend, and his danger being, lest his eye might deceive him and lead him in a direction altogether different from that which he should take—we know not any words better fitted to express the leading idea conveyed in the prayer than those used, *viz.*, that the Lord would turn, or prevent, his eyes from straying in a wrong direction, and would quicken and encourage him in the right way. The “dreaded reproach,” in verse 39, is nothing else than that of having been hindered from fulfilling Jehovah's commandments, and celebrating his ordinances, while an exile in idolatrous Philistia. This reproach David prays the Lord to remove from him by accomplishing his promise, mentioned in verse 38. And he closes, verse 40, “Behold how I languish for thy statutes ! quicken me for thy righteousness' sake.”

γ PART SIXTH.

41. May thy tender mercies bring me back again, O Jehovah ;
May thy salvation come to me according to thy promise.
42. Then will I answer him that reproacheth me in these words,
“That I have put my trust in thy promise.”

43. Withhold not from my mouth this truthful answer very long,
For I hopefully depended on thy judgments.
44. Then shall I observe thy law continually, always and ever.
45. Then will I walk in a broad path, when I have celebrated thy statutes.
46. And I will speak of thy testimonies before kings, and not be ashamed.
47. And I shall be greatly delighted with thy commandments,
which I love.
48. And I will lift up my hands to thy beloved commandments,
And devote solemn meditation to thy ordinances.

David, even in Philistia, was exposed to slander and reproach from his wicked and bitter enemies. These reproaches seem to have been, 1st, That he was alienated from the ordinances of that God whom he pretended to serve; and, 2d, That his conduct was not right, in that he acted in a manner in which, as a private individual, he was not authorised. These are the reproaches of which he speaks in verses 22 and 39. But he knew well on what foundation he was basing his authority for his actions. He was the anointed king of the God of Jacob, though the wicked in Israel acknowledged him not. Jehovah repeatedly confirmed this promise to him during his persecutions under Saul; and Saul himself twice acknowledged him as king (1 Sam. xxiv. 20–22, xxvi. 25). All these reproaches and slanders would be removed at once by the fulfilment of the Divine promises to him; and therefore he says, in verses 41 and 42, that when he is brought back to his country, when salvation or deliverance is brought to him (the word **יְבֹאֲנִי** at the beginning of verse 41, falls also upon the second clause, “May thy salvation come, or be conveyed to me,” &c.; so in the first clause it might be rendered, “convey me back,” and in the same sense understood in the second), then will he answer them that reproach him in those words, or “in such a manner.” **דָּבָר** (Davor) here signifies, the contents of the answer; hence it is used in verse 43 for the answer itself, (as **דָּבָר**, when coming after

אָשׁוּב, or **אָעֲנֶה**, always signifies; see Num. xiii. 26; Deut. i. 25, where it should be “answer” instead of “words,” as it is in 2 Sam. xxiv. 13). And what was David’s answer to be, but that he did build upon a strong foundation, even upon Jehovah’s word of promise? I will answer them, “that I have put my trust in,” or that I have depended on, “thy promise” (see exposition of Part vii.) He then prays in verse 41 that the opportunity of giving this only and truthful answer might not be withheld from him very long; *i.e.* that salvation and deliverance might soon put him in the position of using this answer with proper effect, and thus stop the mouth of his enemies; and of giving him cause at the same time to bless Jehovah for his mercies towards him, as he states in the other lines of this Part. The figure used in verse 45 will be better understood by comparing it with the exposition of the first Part. Verse 48. “And I will lift up my hands to do thy beloved commandments.” The simple act of lifting up the hands signifies, a being up and *doing*; and therefore we have put in the verb *to do*, the action being included in the lifting up of the hands. The

exercise of fulfilling the Lord's commandments would naturally lead him to solemn profound meditation on all the ordinances of the law, and their mysterious signification.

† PART SEVENTH.

49. Remember unto thy servant the promise,
On' which thou hast made me depend.
50. This was my comfort in my affliction,
For thy promise quickened me.
51. Enticers have derided me exceedingly,
Yet did I not turn aside from thy law.
52. I remembered thy judgments of old, O Jehovah !
And I found consolation.
53. Amazement laid hold on me, because of the wicked who
abandon thy law.
54. But thy ordinances have been songs unto me in the abode of
my pilgrimage.
55. By night I remembered thy name, O Jehovah, and I will ob-
serve thy law.
56. This, I shall have accomplished, when I have kept thy sta-
tutes.

There are two words in this Psalm in which David expresses "promise;" he either uses **אָמַר** (Omer), as in verses 38, 41, and 50 (which must mean, promise), or he uses **דָּבַר** (Davor), as in verses 25, 28, and 42. Both these nouns signify "a word," i.e. the "word of promise," as those passages can by no means refer to the word of God in the law; for what sense would there be in the 38th verse if read, "accomplish thy law unto thy servant?" But in the passages referred to, these nouns are attached to pronouns **אִמְרָתִי** (Imrathecha), **דְּבָרִי** (Devarecha), both signifying, "thy promise." But in verse 49 the noun (Davor) is used without the pronoun "thy." David says, "Remember unto thy servant the promise, on which thou hast made me depend," or, "for which thou hast made me wait in hope." Thus he states in verse 50, that Jehovah's promise was his only consolation in his afflictions, because he was sure that the latter would soon be over. In verses 53 and 54, the following idea is contained, that whereas "the amazement at," or "great terror" of the wicked, laid hold on him, and obliged him to abandon his country, and be an exile in Philistia, still as he had such a great delight in the word of God—in His commandments and statutes, especially in the temple ordinances—he made the latter his regular hymns in the abode, or house of his pilgrimage there. He could not celebrate these ordinances; but he sang of them, and repeated them often in his house in the words in which they were instituted in the law, for he had the law entirely in his memory. (See verses 11 and 13, and exposition.) Verses 55, 56. He remembered Jehovah by night, and resolved to observe strictly the whole law of such a good God; but Philistia was not the place in which to accomplish this, for there he could not

observe the Divine statutes. (See exposition on the first part.) The latter of these verses is therefore to be viewed as an expressive prayer for restoration.

▮ PART EIGHTH.

67. O Jehovah, thou art my portion ;
I have resolved to preserve thy word.
58. I entreat thee with all my heart ;
Be gracious to me according to thy promise.
59. I calculated my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.
60. I made haste, and delayed not to observe thy commandments
61. The bands of the wicked enclosed me ;
Yet have I not forgotten thy law.
62. At midnight will I rise to praise thee for thy righteous judgments.
63. I am the companion of all those who fear thee,
And who keep thy statutes.
64. The earth is full of thy mercy, O Jehovah ;
Train me in thy ordinances.

The *word*, mentioned by David in verse 57, means again the "word of promise ;" and because in Jehovah was his portion, therefore he resolved to preserve that "word of promise" in his mind, until he should see it verified. The *preserving* of the word here stands exactly in the same sense as in Gen. xxxvii. 11, and Dan. vii. 28, though the *word* in these two passages is different. But the preserving of the word in our passage is more akin to that in Luke ii. 19, 51. The figure in verse 59 will appear more striking when compared with the exposition of verse 2. There is only one way leading towards heaven ; but men sometimes think that some by-path of their own is just as good, and thus they lose the right way altogether. Pilgrim David, when he found himself in such a by-way, stopped at once, and began to calculate whether it would lead him to heaven. Was he not in the wrong ? Where was the high-road of the Great King ? Then having calculated his ways, he hastened back to the unerring guide-posts, "and turned his feet to God's testimonies."

▮ PART NINTH.

65. Thou hast done good unto thy servant, O Jehovah,
Even according to thy promise.
66. Teach me right discernment and understanding,
For I believed in thy commandments.
67. Before I was afflicted, I erred ;
But now have I preserved thy word.

68. Thou art good, and doest good ;
Train me in thy ordinances.
69. The enticers have forged falsehood against me ;
But I will preserve thy statutes with all my heart.
70. Their heart is engrossed in fat ;
But I am greatly delighted in thy law.
71. It is good for me that I was afflicted,
That I should learn thy ordinances.
72. The instruction of thy mouth I prefer to thousands of gold
and silver.

David had pleaded several times, that the Lord would fulfil the promise made to him ; and he now remembers how much good, both temporal and spiritual, had been already bestowed on him on account of that promise. Thus he says, verse 65, "Thou hast done good unto," or, "Thou hast dealt bountifully with thy servant, O Jehovah, even according to thy promise." After having prayed the Lord, in verse 66, to teach him right discernment and understanding, he makes a statement in verse 67, that "before he was afflicted," *i.e.*, before he endured Saul's severe persecutions, "he erred." What he means by "erring" will be better seen when we compare this verse with the 71st: "It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I should learn," or "in order that I should learn thine ordinances." The question now arises, how was it that David's affliction was made the means of teaching him the Lord's ordinances? This will easily be understood, when we consider the fact, that David in his agonizing afflictions was the type of "the Man of sorrows," whose sufferings he predicted in his plaintive Psalms, and regarding whose character and offices, humiliation and exaltation, he was favoured with so many Divine oracles, during the time of his own bitter sufferings. Thus we see at once how his afflictions led him to understand the types exhibited in the tabernacle, and in the ordinances celebrated there. Therefore says he, "It is good for me that I was afflicted, in order that I should learn thy ordinances," *i.e.* that mine eyes should be opened to see what they mean—what they represent or typify. Let us now read verse 67, "Before I was afflicted, I erred." The word שָׁגָג (Shogeg) does not signify, "to go astray," as many have rendered it, but "to err," *i.e.* to misunderstand things, not rightly to apprehend them: "Before I was afflicted, I erred, but now have I preserved thy word," or "thy promise." (See again our remark on verse 57; comp. Luke ii. 19, 51.) The meaning of verse 69 is, that the enticers, or rebels, forged falsehood against him, when they said that he despised God's law, and abandoned his statutes: "But," says he, "I will preserve thy statutes with all my heart." Verse 70. Read בְּחֻלֵּב for בְּחֻלֵּב, and compare Psalm xvii. 10, lxxiii. 7; Isa. vi. 10.

¶ PART TENTH.

73. Thy hands have made me, and established me ;
O make me wise, that I may learn thy commandments.

74. So that they who fear thee, may see me and rejoice :
For hopefully do I wait for thy word.
75. I know, O Jehovah, that righteous are thy judgments,
And that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.
76. O let now thy compassion be to comfort me,
According to thy promise unto thy servant.
77. O may thy mercies restore me, that I may be quickened ;
For thy instruction is my great delight.
78. Let the rebel be put to shame, who treacherously perplexed
me ;
But I will devoutly meditate on thy statutes.
79. Let those that fear thee resort to me, and those who know
thy statutes.
80. O let my heart be perfect in thy ordinances,
In order that I be not put to shame.

David was the man appointed by God to establish and arrange the order of the Lord's sanctuary—the priests and Levites, the altars and sacrifices, to accomplish which he needed a profound knowledge of the ceremonial law. For this, accordingly, he prays in verse 73, "Thy hands have made me and established me," or "prepared me;" *i.e.*, to accomplish great and important things in thy sanctuary ; "O make me wise that I may learn," or, "that I may acquire a minute acquaintance with thy commandments." Verse 74. "So that those who fear thee," *i.e.*, those who seek and supplicate Jehovah for the time of restoration of tabernacle and priesthood, which were overturned by wicked Saul, that these "may see me and rejoice : For hopefully," or, with great anxiety, "do I wait for thy word," *i.e.*, for the fulfilment of the promise. As soon as that promise was fulfilled, David's first step was towards Zion and Jerusalem, in order that he might restore and establish the ruined tabernacle, priesthood, and service of God. Then the children of God surely rejoiced with David, their pious and devoted King. Verse 77. "O may thy mercies restore me," or, "bring me back again," *i.e.*, to Judea, the place of his nativity. During his sojourn in Ziklag, many Israelites resorted to him from all the tribes, (see 1 Chron. xii. 1—23) ; and in verse 79, he prays that all who might resort to him thence, might be God-fearing men, and well versed in the law and testimonies. In verse 80, he prays that he might not only understand the mysteries of Jehovah's ordinances, but also arrange, attend, and celebrate them with a heart full of piety and devotion.

▷ PART ELEVENTH.

81. My soul languisheth for thy salvation ;
For thy promise I wait in hope.
82. Mine eyes are faint for thy promise, saying,
When wilt thou comfort me ?
83. Even when I was like a skin-bottle in the smoke,
I did not forget thy ordinances.

84. How many are the days of thy servant ?
 When wilt thou execute judgment upon my persecutors ?
85. The rebels have digged pits for me, which is opposed to thy law.
86. All thy commandments are faithfulness ;
 But they treacherously persecuted me : O help me.
87. They have almost consumed me while in the land,
 But I have not abandoned thy statutes.
88. According to thy tender love, quicken me,
 That I may observe the testimonies of thy mouth.

Verse 81. "For thy promise," *i.e.*, for the fulfilment of the same, "I wait in hope." The word יָחֵל (Yachel) signifies a patient but eager, an anxious but hopeful, waiting for some things and has scarcely a fit substitute in any other language that we know. Verse 82. "Mine eyes are faint for thy promise," *i.e.*, from the constant watching and looking out for the fulfilment of the same, "saying," or thinking, "When wilt thou comfort me?" Verse 83. In the east, especially by those who travel in the deserts, bottles made of the skins of animals are used for carrying water. In preparing these skins for this purpose, they are first filled with air, and then hung up in the smoke to dry, in order that they may be made firm, and their offensive smell taken away. When in this situation, they are agitated and driven round by the action of the smoke and air upon them. And hence, David says, "Even when I was like a skin-bottle in the smoke," *i.e.*, when he was agitated through fear of Saul, and driven about from mountain to valley, and from desert to cave, even then "I did not forget thy ordinances."

PART TWELFTH.

89. For ever, O Jehovah, is thy Word established in Heaven.
90. Thy faithfulness endureth throughout all generations ;
 Thou hast established the earth, and so it abideth.
91. According to thy orders, all things stand to this day ;
 For all things are thy servants.
92. Unless thy law had been my great delight,
 Then I had perished in my affliction.
93. I will never forget thy statutes,
 For with them hast thou quickened me.
94. I am thine, O save me ; for I enquired into thy statutes.
95. The wicked waited for me to destroy me :
 But I study thy testimonies.
96. Of all that is perfect have I seen the end ;
 But thy commandment is large above all.

Verse 89. "For ever, O Jehovah is thy Word established," or, thy Word stands, "in heaven." This verse needs no other comment than that given by the inspired ambassador of the Word himself (see John i. 1—5 ;

compare also Ps. lxxxix. 35—37.) Inasmuch as "all things are upheld by the word of God's power," (Heb. i. 3), the Psalmist goes on to describe in verses 90 and 91, his faithfulness by which he ordered, arranged, and maintains all his creatures, animate and inanimate, for the word אֶרֶץ (Eretz), "earth," or "world," includes them all. The הַכֹּל (Hakol), "all things," in the second clause of the 91st verse, is to be understood as referring to the first also, "According to thy orders they stand;" but what is meant by "they stand," is explained in next clause by (Hakol), "all things," everything created, whether in heaven or on earth, stand by the orders of Jehovah's Word, for all things created are his servants. See Heb. ii. 5—9. Verse 96. "Of all that is perfect have I seen the end." The word תִּכְלָה (Tichlah) means "a perfectly finished work," as also the act of finishing a work which had been begun. The meaning here is, that even things of the greatest perfection have some defect which puts an end to admiration of them; but not so the Word of God and his commandments—there is no defect in them, no end to their excellency. "Thy commandment is large above all."

ח PART THIRTEENTH.

97. O how love I thy law! all day long it forms my meditation.
98. Thy commandments make me wiser than mine enemies,
Because they are ever with me.
99. I overgrew in knowledge all my teachers,
For thy testimonies are my continual meditation.
100. I understand more than the elders,
For I observed thy statutes.
101. I withdrew my feet from every evil path,
That I might preserve thy word.
102. From thy orders have I not departed,
For thou hast taught me thus.
103. O how pleasant are thy words to my taste!
Even more than honey to my mouth.
104. From thy statutes I attain understanding,
Therefore I hate every false path.

In this Part we have an example of what perseverance in the study of heaven's revealed Word will produce in a devoted child of God. Verse 97. Pure love and deep affection to the law of God, made David appoint it as the chief and principal object of his continual meditation. Verse 98. This enabled him to confound his enemies in their malicious devices; verse 99, To exceed in learning all his teachers; verse 100, To abound in discretion, in knowledge, and experience, above all the aged, or elders, of his nation (זִקְנִים, "Zekenim," does not mean either here or anywhere else, "ancients," but "elders," or "aged men," men of wisdom and experience (see 1 Kings xii. 6, 13; Job xxxii. 9; Lam. v. 14); verse 101, To keep constantly in the right way towards heaven; verse 102, To stick close to the orders of God according as he taught him in His word; verse 103,

To increase in that love daily, and to make it supreme; verse 104, To abhor every false path that leadeth astray. Thus he would go on from strength to strength, and be transformed from glory to glory, until the perfection procured by the work of the real Word, fitted his soul to be bound up in the bundle of eternal life with Jehovah-Zebaoth.

⌋ PART FOURTEENTH.

105. Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
106. I have sworn, and am steadfastly resolved,
To observe thy righteous orders.
107. I am exceedingly afflicted; O Jehovah,
Quicken me according to thy promise.
108. The free-will offerings of my mouth,
Be thou pleased to accept, O Jehovah;
And make me acquainted with thy judgments.
109. My soul is continually in my hand,
But I have not forgotten thy law.
110. The wicked have laid a snare for me;
But from thy statutes I strayed not.
111. I adopted thy testimonies as my eternal inheritance;
For they are the delight of my heart.
112. I incline my heart to celebrate thy ordinances,
Even for the eternal end.

To be in constant danger of one's life, so as to have always to watch with the sword in the hand, or for one to expose himself to great danger with the sword in his hand, was styled by the ancient Hebrews, "to have one's soul in his hand," or "to take one's soul into his hand" (see Judg. xii. 3; 1 Sam. xix. 5). Hence David, in reference to the danger he was exposed to, says, verse 109, "My soul is continually in my hand," &c. Verse 112. Having stated in the preceding verse that he adopted Jehovah's testimonies as his eternal inheritance, he concludes by saying that he inclined his heart to celebrate His ordinances *for the eternal end*; i.e. for that glorious end which they were intended to prefigure—the great salvation they foreshadowed. (See exposition of Part ix.)

⌋ PART FIFTEENTH.

113. I hated fluctuating opinions; but I loved thy instructions.
114. Thou art my refuge and my shield; for thy promise I wait
in hope.
115. Depart from me, ye malefactors;
That I may keep my Lord's commandments.
116. Support me, according to thy promise,
That I may be quickened;
And let me not be ashamed of my expectation.

117. Sustain me, that I may be safe,
Then will I steadily attend thy ordinances.
118. Thou hast trodden down all who wandered from thy ordinances;
For their wicked inventions were falsehood.
119. Like dross hast thou wasted all the wicked of the earth,
Therefore have I loved thy testimonies.
120. My flesh trembled for fear of thee, and I dreaded thy judgments.

Verse 113. "I hated fluctuating opinions," *i.e.* like those of Saul and his associates, who at one time declared him guilty, and condemned him to death; at another, when convinced of his innocence, they repented; but soon changed their opinions again, and would have him destroyed still. Such unsettled, fluctuating opinions David hated in matters of religion; for pure love of Jehovah's instructions (in His law) dispersed all doubt, and confirmed his faith. See 1 Kings xviii. 21. On verses 118 and 119, see Numb. xiv. 29—32. Deut. xxxii. 19—27. On verse 120, see Psalm cxi., or chronologically Psalm iii. 10; also Hab. iii. 2.

Y PART SIXTEENTH.

121. I have executed judgment and justice;
Abandon me not to the gripe of mine enemies.
122. Be thou surety for the welfare of thy servant,
That the rebels may not snatch me off.
123. Mine eyes languish for thy salvation,
And for thy benevolent promise.
124. Deal with thy servant according to thy loving kindness;
And train me in thy ordinances.
125. I am thy servant: instruct me how to comprehend thy testimonies.
126. It is time to operate for Jehovah; for they have made void thy law.
127. Therefore do I love thy commandments above gold—yea,
above the purest gold.
128. Therefore I regulated my way according to all thy statutes;
Therefore I hated every false path.

^ Verse 121. In this, and in the next verse, commentators have rendered the word פָּשַׁע (Oshek), by "oppression," and hence they read them, "Leave me not to mine oppressors," and "Let not the proud oppress me." But the word means "oppression" just as little as the English words "robbery" or "murder" mean it. Indeed it may be said, that to rob, or murder, is also, to oppress; but would we say to a manslayer, "*he oppressed a man?*" The word פָּשַׁע (Oshek) means, either the "violent snatching away of anything," and thus it designates the violent act, or it signifies,

"the thing violently snatched away." This meaning it has in Lev. vi. 2, 4, Ezek. xxii. 29, and in many other places, where it is erroneously rendered "oppression," or "deceit;" but the signification always is, "violent extortion," or, a rapid snatching away of anything. It is used figuratively in Job xl. 23 of the behemoth, or hippopotamus, in that "he snatches away at, or extorts a river, and hastens not;" expressive of the rapidity with which he draws the immense quantity of water into his mouth. Thus, says David in verse 121, "I have executed judgment and justice; abandon me not to the gripe of mine enemies," or "do not abandon me to those that would snatch me away;" *i.e.* Saul and his other bitter enemies. "Be thou surety," is only a forced substitute of the Hebrew verb עֲרַב (Arov) in the absence of a better. It does not mean "to be a surety," but is rather expressive of the act of one who interposes that he may become a surety for another. This David prays from the Lord that He would thus interpose for him in preserving him—in securing his welfare, and in keeping him so that the rebels might not snatch him off to his destruction. This expression is beautifully used by Hezekiah, Isaiah xxxviii. 14, "O Lord, עֲשֵׂה לִי עֶשְׂקֶה-לִי (ashkah li), snatch me away," *i.e.* from the hands of death; "become surety for me," *i.e.* for the years thou shalt grant me; and then take me to thyself at last.

Verse 123. "Thy benevolent promise." The word צְדָקָה (Tzedakah), which is invariably rendered "righteousness," means oftener "benevolence" than righteousness. "Mine eyes languish for thy salvation, and for thy benevolent promise;" *i.e.* that according to Jehovah's gracious promise, salvation and deliverance would come to him in order that he might be able to do more for the Lord's testimonies and commandments, and to enjoy and celebrate his ordinances, as expressed in verses 124 and 125. In verse 126 David states the reason of his great anxiety that the Lord would fulfil his promise to him, and enable him to restore his statutes and laws to their order: "It is time to operate for Jehovah." This clause is susceptible of a double signification, and might have been so intended by the Psalmist; *i.e.* it is time for both to operate; for Jehovah to fulfil His promise to David, to destroy his enemies and establish him on the throne of Israel; and it is time for David to restore the violated and destroyed laws, commandments, and ordinances of God. Verses 127 and 128. "Therefore I love," "Therefore I regulated," *i.e.* because "it is time to operate"—to be up and doing. Critics have adopted various readings in the last verse, to the great violation of the text; but there is no need for it if we arrange the very same letters as follows: עַל כֵּן כָּל פְּקֻדֶּיךָ לִי שָׁרַתִּי (al ken kol Pikudecha li shorti.)

□ PART SEVENTEENTH.

129. Wonderful are thy testimonies :
Therefore hath my soul preserved them.
130. The revelation of thy word giveth light ;
Giving understanding to the simple.
131. I opened my mouth and panted ;
For I longed after thy commandments.

132. Turn unto me and be gracious unto me,
According to thy determination for those who love thy name.
133. Direct my steps according to thy promise ;
And let no calamity gain dominion over me.
134. Deliver me from the ravenousness of man,
And I will keep thy statutes.
135. Make thy face to shine on thy servant ;
And train me in thy ordinances.
136. Streams of water run down mine eyes,
Because of those who keep not thy law.

Verse 130. "The revelation of thy word giveth light;" *i.e.* when the *wonders* contained in Jehovah's word and testimonies (mentioned in verse 129) are expounded, laid open, and well understood, then a radiant light is shed upon the shadow, and glorious things are seen in it. Here German Rationalistic theology is confounded ; for here we see that the saints of old looked deeper into the Word of God than the mere surface of the letter. Verse 132. "According to thy determination." The Hebrew **כְּמִשְׁפֹּט** (*Kamishpott*), "according to the usual order, or custom;" but "determination" we take to be the right meaning here—according as the Lord determined, for those who love him. Verse 134, "Deliver me from the ravenousness," or the "snatching away." See exposition on verses 121 and 122. Verse 136—compare verses 126 and 139.

פ PART EIGHTEENTH.

137. Righteous art thou, O Jehovah ;
And upright are thy judgments.
138. Thou hast ordered thy testimonies in righteousness,
And in great faithfulness.
139. My zeal consumed me ;
For my adversaries have forgotten thy word.
140. Thy word is exceedingly bright, and thy servant loveth it.
141. I am young and despised ; but thy statutes have I not forgotten.
142. Thy righteousness is an eternal righteousness, and thy law is truth.
143. Distress and oppression found me out ;
But thy commandments are my great delight.
144. Ever righteous are thy testimonies :
O make me wise that I may live.

The notion of translators and commentators, that David composed this Psalm in advanced age, has led them to render the word **צָעִיר** (*Tzair*), in verse 141, "small,"—"I am small and despised;" but the reader will have seen how erroneous it is, and that he was a young man when he wrote it ; according to the real meaning of the word, therefore, he said, "I am

young and despised." He was so in the eyes of Saul and his wicked friends, but he was in favour with God. (See the meaning of the word [Tzair], Gen. xxv. 23, xxix. 26, xliii. 33, xlviii. 14; Job xxxii. 6, &c., &c.)

ך PART NINETEENTH.

145. With all my heart I call; answer me, O Jehovah;
Thy ordinances will I celebrate.
146. I called upon thee: O save me,
That I may keep to thy testimonies.
147. I prevented the day dawn, and cried aloud;
Waiting hopefully for thy promise.
148. Mine eyes prevented the night watches,
To meditate on thy words.
149. Hear my voice, according to thy loving kindness;
Quicken me, O Jehovah, according to thy custom.
150. When the mischief hunters approached me,
Who are alienated from thy law:
151. Then thou, Jehovah, wast near me,
And all thy truthful commandments.
152. O thou Eternal, I know of thy testimonies,
That thou hast established them for ever.

Verse 149. Here we have again the word מִשְׁפֹּט (Mishpot), in another sense than that in which it is often used. It has a very extensive signification, sometimes standing for judgment, judicial decision or punishment; and at other times designating order, manner, determination, regulation, direction. In our verse, it signifies the manner in which Jehovah, in His sovereign disposal, treats and rewards his faithful children that love his name. (See verse 132, and exposition—compare also, for the meaning of the word, Judges xiii. 12; 1 Sam. xxvii. 11.) Verses 150 and 151 form one sentence, and mean, that when those wicked men, who hunted for mischief, approached David to attack him, he was secure, because Jehovah and His faithful directions approached him at the sametime, and He who was with and for him was surely stronger than all those who were against him. (See Ps. xxvii. 2.) Verse 152. "O thou eternal:" this we think to be the meaning here of קֶדֶם (Kedem), and so it is in Deut. xxxiii. 27, "The eternal God;" but the אֱלֹהֵי (Elohey) is dropt, because the verse must begin with כ, and after "Kedem," it could not be placed. (For the meaning of the term "for ever," compare Matth. v. 18.)

ך PART TWENTIETH.

153. Behold my misery, and succour me;
For I have not forgotten thy law.

154. Fight thou my battle and redeem me :
After thy promise quicken me.
155. Salvation is far from the wicked ;
For they attended not thy ordinances.
156. Thy mercies are numerous, O Jehovah :
Quicken me according to thy custom.
157. Many are my persecutors and my oppressors ;
Yet did I not turn aside from thy testimonies.
158. When I saw transgressors, I was vexed ;
For they kept not thy word.
159. Behold how I loved thy statutes, O Jehovah ;
According to thy loving-kindness quicken me.
160. Most excellent is thy truthful word,
Every one of thy righteous orders shall endure for ever.

On verse 156, compare verses 132 and 149, and expositions. On verse 157, compare exposition of verse 2 ; and see that David means here, that though he was severely persecuted on his pilgrimage in the path of the law, and that nothing was more likely than that he would have turned out of that path and sought another, still he kept to the guide posts cost what it might. Verse 160. "Most excellent." So רוֹאֵשׁ (Rosh) here signifies ; comp. Exod. xxx. 23 ; Song iv. 14 ; and so in many other places.

י PART TWENTY-FIRST.

161. Princes have persecuted me without cause ;
But by thy promise my heart was tremulous with joy.
162. I rejoiced over thy promise, as one who finds a vast spoil.
163. Falsehood I hated and abhorred ; but I loved thy law.
164. Seven times a day I praised thee,
On account of thy righteous judgments.
165. Great peace enjoy the lovers of thy law ;
And nothing do they meet therein to offend them.
166. I have waited for thy salvation, O Jehovah,
And obeyed thy commandments.
167. My soul observes thy testimonies ;
For I love them exceedingly.
168. I preserved thy statutes and testimonies ;
For all my ways are before thee.

Verse 161. "My heart was tremulous with joy." The word פָּחַד (Pachad) means, that agitation or trembling which is produced by the sudden surprise, arising either from calamity or joy. It is often joined with "heart," because the heart beats high, and vibrates on such an occasion. In our verse, it means a "trembling for joy," as may be seen from the immediately following one : "I rejoice over thy promise." In the same sense the

word occurs in Isa. lx. 5 ; Jer. xxxiii. 9, where the reader will see that to render the word by "fear" is erroneous. The sense of verse 168 is, that David walked so closely with God, that he saw him, as it were, in all his ways ; and directing his steps as in his presence, he could not but preserve his statutes and testimonies, the only guides in the right path.

□ PART TWENTY SECOND.

169. Let my complaint come before thee, O Jehovah :
According to thy promise, give me understanding.
170. Let my supplication come before thee :
Deliver me according to thy promise.
171. My mouth shall overflow with praise.
When thou shalt train me in thy ordinances,
172. My tongue shall respond to thy promise ;
For all thy commandments are righteous.
173. Let thy hand appear for my help ;
For I have chosen thy statutes.
174. I languish for thy salvation, O Jehovah ;
And thine instructions are my great delight.
175. May my soul live to extol thee ;
And let thy judgments sustain me.
176. I wander about like a lost sheep : O seek thou thy servant ;
For I have not forgotten thy commandments.

Thus did the inspired and illustrious exile complete his spiritual fortification in the land of Philistia. He surrounded himself with the laws and commandments of his righteous God—enwrapped his soul in the statutes and precepts, in the instructions and exhortations, in the warnings and counsels of the great Shepherd of Israel—leaned himself on the promises and on the tokens of favour which he received from his merciful Father in heaven—kindled a large and lustrous lamp at the rays of Jehovah's brightness, and of the lightnings which surrounded the secret tabernacle of the Ancient of Days—fixed his spiritual eye upon the gate of heaven, and firmly resolved to keep close to the testimonies, the guide-posts thither. He begins his celestial journey following the footsteps of these *happy and faithful pilgrims*, with whom he opens this glorious Psalm. And, in the last Part, he closes the whole with prayer and supplication for the fulfilment of the promise in his deliverance and restoration. "I wander about like a lost sheep : O seek thy servant ; for I have not forgotten thy commandment."

PREFACE TO PSALMS CV, CVI., & CVII.

These three Psalms belong also, we think, to the period of David's exile in Philistia ; the two former of which he seems to have composed for his own consolation while he was in this state. His consolation consisted in contemplating the mysterious ways of Jehovah towards his saints in the

days of old ; especially towards the Patriarchs, who, though they had the promises, were yet obliged to wander about as strangers and pilgrims, not only in Canaan, but in other lands. He considered how wonderful had been His dealings towards Joseph, who was first sold as a slave into Egypt—then imprisoned there for no crime of his own—afterwards enlarged and brought into favour with the monarch, and made chief ruler over all the land. He saw how all this was subservient to the accomplishment of the Divine purpose of bringing the chosen family into Egypt, not only that they might be preserved in the famine “which was over all the face of the earth ;” but also, and especially, that their descendants, by means of the trials and cruel bondage which they would there undergo, might be purified and prepared for the covenant which God had made with their fathers. These considerations were well qualified to afford comfort to the exiled David, and to inspire the hope that, waiting the Lord’s time, He would assuredly fulfil his gracious promises, and thus prove himself the same faithful God to him, that He had been to the Patriarchs and the people of Israel. Even Israel’s provocations, and the Divine long-suffering and mercy, recorded in these Psalms, were fitted to impart consolation to him in his present circumstances. Apart, therefore, from the strong internal evidence which they bear of having been written during the above period, we request the reader’s attention to the prayers contained in verses 4 and 5, and 47 and 48 of the cvi. ; and then to judge whether there was any other time when David could have prayed, that himself, and those with him, might be gathered from among the heathen nations, and restored to the enjoyment of the privileges of God’s people. That these Psalms are David’s—that they are one whole—and that they were written by him before he was advanced to rule over all Israel, will be manifest as we go through them : But meanwhile, if further proof were necessary, we may refer to 1 Chron. xvi., where we see, that the Psalm which he gave out to be sung in the tabernacle before the order was fully arranged, consisted of the first part of Psalm cv., of Psalm xcvi., and of the last two verses of Psalm cvi. We may state, moreover, that it is clear from the 5th verse of the Psalm last mentioned, that Israel was at that time in Palestine, possessed of independence, and in the enjoyment of all their privileges, if they had chosen to exercise them ; and that not a single word is to be found throughout these two Psalms having reference to any historical event occurring after David’s death ; which shows how unfounded the opinion is, which assigns them to the time of the captivity.

Psalm cvii. also evidently belongs to the same period as the two preceding. Like them, it has no title, because it does not treat of any particular subject ; and, like them, it begins with an invitation to Israel to praise God for his works of wonder towards the children of men. It is full of general instruction, and calls on various classes, or parties, who may have experienced special providential mercies and deliverances, to bless Jehovah for his great and unmerited goodness. It is possible that David might have been the subject of some of these deliverances himself which he has specified generally in the Psalm, and therefore wrote them down to be kept in memory. This, however, as well as the division of it into its proper parts, will be seen from its own evidence.

PS. CV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXXVII.

1. O give praise to Jehovah ; call upon his name ;
Declare among the nations his mighty operations.
2. O sing to him—to him sing praise ;
Earnestly meditate on all his wondrous works.
3. Exult in the name of his holiness ;
Rejoice shall the heart of those who seek Jehovah.
4. Inquire for Jehovah and his omnipotence ;
Seek ye his face continually.
5. Remember the wonderful works which he hath done—
His miracles, and the judgments of his mouth ;
6. O ye seed of Abraham his servant ;
O ye children of Jacob his chosen.
7. He is Jehovah our God ;
His judgments spread over all the earth.
8. He remembereth for ever his covenant—
His promise, which he ordained for thousands of ages ;
9. The covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac ;
10. And established it unto Jacob as an ordinance—
Unto Israel as an everlasting covenant,
11. Saying, to thee will I give the land of Canaan,
For the line of your inheritance.
12. When they were small in number,
Very few, and strangers in the land ;
13. And when they wandered about from nation to nation,
And from one kingdom to that of another people ;
14. He permitted no man to bereave them ;
Yea, he reprov'd kings for their sake.

These verses may be considered as the first part, or paragraph, of this Psalm. The first contains a general call, summoning the children of God to lift their voices in praise and adoration, and to rejoice in Jehovah, who has wrought such great miracles and wonders in the days of old. In verses 6 and 7 it is intimated that the call regards especially the seed of Abraham—the children of Jacob—who stand in a peculiar relation to that great God, because of the everlasting covenant into which he entered with their fathers, the Patriarchs, and which covenant, as confirmed and ratified, is described in verses 8, 9, 10, and 11 ; declaring in verse 8 Jehovah's everlasting faithfulness in remembering His promises to fulfil them. In verses 12, 13, and 14, Jehovah's guardian care over the covenanted Patriarchs, while wandering as strangers and pilgrims in that promised land, so weak and few in number, that any tyrant might have easily extirpated them, is briefly but most emphatically described : " When they were small in number, very few, and strangers in the land," i.e. in Canaan, which is mentioned in the previous verse as the land of promise. But as various famines and other peculiar circumstances did not allow them even to remain in Canaan as strangers, the Psalmist goes on to say, in verse 13, " And when they wandered about from nation

to nation, and from one kingdom to that of another people," i.e. from Canaan to Egypt, from Canaan to Philistia, to Mesopotamia, and again to Canaan; even in those solitary and nomadic wanderings, "He permitted no man to bereave them," or "to snatch them away;" and it may imply here, that no man was permitted to touch them, or anything belonging to them; (see about the word **שֶׁשֶׁק** (Oshek) in our translation and exposition of verses 121 and 122 of the preceding Psalm); "Yea, he reprov'd kings for their sake." The events in the history of the Patriarchs to which this verse refers are conspicuous enough, and have no need of being repeated. Abraham and Sarah in Egypt, (Gen. xii. 10—20)—Lot's captivity and Abraham's triumph over the kings, (Gen. xiv. 11—16)—Abraham and Sarah at Gerar in Philistia, (Gen. xx.)—Isaac and Rebekah in Gerar, (Gen. xxvi.)—Jacob in his flight from Esau, (Gen. xxviii. 10—22)—his flight from Laban, (Gen. xxxi. 25—30)—his meeting with Esau, (Gen. xxxiii. and xxxiiii.)—the danger he was in when his sons destroyed the city of Shechem, (Gen. xxxiv. and xxxv. 1—14.) All the events recorded in these passages are striking illustrations of what David says in verse 14, "He permitted no man to bereave them; yea, he reprov'd kings for their sake." The "reproving," or chastening of kings for the patriarchs' sake must have special reference to Abraham and Sarah, first in Egypt and then in Gerar (see the above passages.) All this was wonderfully calculated to afford comfort and consolation to David, who was in the very land of Philistia where the Lord had once reprov'd Abimelech its king for having taken Sarah, Abraham's wife, and told him to reconcile Abraham and restore Sarah to him, or he must die, (see Gen. xx.) Having stated in verses 7 and 8 that Jehovah was still the same—that he remembers his covenant for ever, and his promise even for thousands of ages, he proceeds in verse 15 to show that Jehovah continues to watch over his servants, and that his sovereign command was the same now, as it was of old.

15. Ye shall not touch mine anointed; and to my prophets do no harm.

This verse stands quite by itself, and refers entirely to David in letter, though it goes back to the Patriarchs in figure. It shows that Jehovah was the same God to David, and as faithful to fulfil his promises to him as he had been to Abraham, when a stranger and sojourner in the same land of Philistia. This verse is the result of what was stated in the preceding fourteen—a parenthesis, containing a joyous exclamation of David in the name of God: like the 6th verse of the 2d Psalm, and as occurs in many other places. He then proceeds to describe the mysterious providence of God towards the Patriarchs—

16. When he brought a famine on the land,
Breaking the whole staff of bread,*

* "Staff of bread" is a figure, and means support, or provision; for, as a staff is the support of a weak or lame man, so is bread to one faint with hunger. (See Psalm civ., or in this book Psalm vii. 15.)

17. He had sent a man before them :
For Joseph had been sold as a slave,
18. His feet were tormented with fetters ;
And iron had pierced his soul :*
19. Until his prediction had come to pass,
When Jehovah's word illuminated him.†
20. Then the King sent and loosed him—
The ruler of nations, and freed him.
21. He made him master over his house,
And ruler over all his possessions :
22. Even to bind his princes to his pleasure ;
And teach his ancients wisdom.‡

The copiousness with which David treats the remarkable history of Joseph, shows that he must have derived much comfort from it ; seeing how God made all things work together for the good of his servants, and for the accomplishment of his own eternal plans. The cruelty of Joseph's brethren to him, and his sufferings in slavery and in prison, all served for the preservation of the covenanted family ; and so David might confidently hope that the cruelty of Saul and his countrymen, who had banished him from his nativity—his sufferings in the deserts, caves, and forests, and even his first imprisonment in Philistia, and now his sojourn there, would all turn out as one whole and compact plan of Jehovah for some glorious purpose.

The next part is a description of the latter history of Israel in Egypt, and their deliverance thence ; but the 23d verse stands in connection with the 17th.

23. Then he brought§ Israel into Egypt ;
And Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.
24. And he increased his people exceedingly,
And made them stronger than their oppressors.
25. When their heart was turned to hate his people,
To devise mischievous plans against his servants. ||

* "Iron had pierced," or penetrated, "his soul." A strong expression to signify the extreme distress he was in, and the anguish of his soul, when iron fetters were fastened to his legs in the prison. So the dreadful affliction which Israel endured in Egypt is represented under the figure of an iron furnace in Deut. iv. 20: "The Lord hath brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt;" for iron requires the strongest fire to melt it.

† "Until his prediction had come to pass." This refers to the interpretation of the dreams of the chief butler and the chief baker. The same expression in the Hebrew, and to the same purpose, is found in Judges xiii. 17: "Jehovah's word illuminated him," i.e. the Spirit of God bestowing his wisdom on him, and giving him understanding to interpret the dreams both of Pharaoh and of his chief butler, and to foretell to them things to come.

‡ "Even to bind his princes to his pleasure;" i.e. Pharaoh bound his princes, making them entirely dependent on Joseph's pleasure. "I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." Gen. xli. 44.

§ Here the pointing is wrong ; it should be וַיְבִיֵא (Vayavay), instead of וַיְבִיֵא (Vayavay), as in verse 40.

|| The verb נָחַל (Nachol) signifies, "to devise wicked plans against one," or "to contrive maliciously one's destruction." In this sense it occurs, Gen. xxxii. 18 ; Numb. xxv. 18.

26. Then he sent Moses his servant— Aaron whom he had chosen.
27. They performed among them the series of his signs,—
And did wonders in the land of Ham.
28. He sent darkness and made it dark ;
Yet were they not embittered because of his words.*
29. Their waters he turned into blood, and killed their fish.
30. Their land swarmed with frogs,
Even in the chambers of their kings.
31. He spake, and there came insects—
Also vermin, into all their regions.
32. He gave them hail instead of rain—
Flames of fire in their land.
33. And he smote their vines and their fig-trees,
And brake the trees of their coasts.
34. He spake, and the locusts came,
Caterpillars also, without number.
35. And they consumed all herbs in their land,
And devoured the fruit of their field.
36. He also smote all the first-born in their land—
The excellency of all their progeny.
37. Then he brought them out with silver and gold ;
There was none left behind of all their tribes.
38. Egypt rejoiced at their departure ;
For their fear had fallen upon them.
39. He spread out a cloud for a covering,
And fire to give light by night.
40. They asked, and he brought quails ;
And with bread from heaven he nourished them.
41. He opened a rock, and waters gushed out—
They flowed in dry places in a stream.
42. For he remembered his holy promise unto Abraham his servant.
43. Thus he brought forth his people with joy—
With shoutings his chosen ones.
44. And he gave to them the lands of heathen ;
And the industry of nations they inherited.
45. That they might observe his ordinances, and keep to his laws :
Hallelujah, Praise ye Jehovah.

David had thus devoted the whole Psalm to show the faithfulness of God

* The reason why David takes notice of the 9th plague first, is this, that in the outset he wishes to show with what a hardened and rebellious race Moses and Aaron had to do—that the incorrigible sons of Ham were not embittered and terrified at the word of God, not even at this great sign, that the everlasting order of nature was changed by his Almighty word. For the word מָרָר (Maru), "embittered," compare Ruth i. 13, 20; 1 Sam. xxx. 6, especially Zech. xii. 10. David then proceeds to enumerate the former plagues, and also the last and effective one, which was that of the first-born.

in his dealings with the Patriarchs of old—in the mysterious ways through which He led them all the days of their lives—in His guardian care over them—and in fulfilling his promises to them in their children, when with wonders and miracles He brought them out of Egypt, and miraculously sustained them in the wilderness. He then closes the Psalm by showing that in all these wonderful transactions with his people, Jehovah had one purpose in view, viz., that they might become faithful depositaries of His Divine Oracles, “That they might observe his ordinances and keep His laws.”

The next Psalm, which may be considered as the second part of the whole, contains a description of Israel’s unfaithfulness and provocations, and of God’s long-suffering and pardoning mercy.

PS. CVI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXXVIII.

Halleluya, Praise ye Jehovah.

1. Render thanks unto Jehovah ; for He is good :
For his mercy lasteth for ever.
2. Who can delineate Jehovah’s mighty acts ?
Who can publish all his praise ?
3. Happy are they who maintain justice—
Performing righteousness at all times.
4. Remember me, O Jehovah, in the accepted atonement of thy
people ;
And visit me with thy salvation :
5. That I may experience the privileges of thy chosen,
That I may rejoice with the joy of thy people,
That I may exult along with thine inheritance.

The foregoing Psalm closes with the statement, that all that the Lord had done for Israel, in their fathers and in themselves, was for the promotion of his own glory, “that they should observe his ordinances and keep to his instructions or laws ;” and in the present, after the adoring exclamation with which it opens, the Psalmist states in verse 3d, the happiness and blessedness of those whose conduct corresponds with Jehovah’s purposes in his people, *i.e.* who understand how to enjoy the privileges of the covenant, and to become worthy of them. But when David remembered that he was now an exile from the privileged land, and bereaved of the benefits of the covenant, he interrupts the historical thread by offering an ardent prayer to the Lord for restoration to the privileges of his covenanted people. “Remember me, O Jehovah, in the accepted atonement of thy people.” The word רָצוֹן (Ratzon) here, is expressive of that gracious favour which Jehovah manifested toward his covenant people, in accepting the atonement made by the High Priest on the day of atonement (and otherwise by Israel’s sin and burnt-offerings on feasts), when their sins were satisfactorily expiated by the blood of the sin-offering sprinkled on the mercy seat, and when the burnt-offering ascended as a sweet smelling sa-

your unto Jehovah, the reconciled Father, who then poured down blessings upon his people. (See for the comprehensive meaning of the word "Rat-zon," Exod. xxviii. 38; Lev. i. 4, xxii. 20, 21; Deut. xxxiii. 11; Isa. lvi. 6, lx. 7; and about the remembrance of God at the accepted atonement, see Exod. xxviii. 29; Lev. xxiii. 24; Num. x. 10.) To be made partaker of this graciously accepted atonement was David's prayer, when he said, "Remember me, O Jehovah, in the accepted atonement of thy people," i.e. though I am not present there—though I am an exile from the land where the atonement is made; still, remember me along with those of thy people whom thou graciously acceptest—whose sin thou pardonest, and to whom thou art reconciled.* He then goes on with his prayer, "And visit me with thy salvation." This also includes restoration and comfort, for he says further, "That I may experience the privileges of thy chosen," i.e., when I am restored to Judea and able to join them: "That I may rejoice with the joy of thy people—that I may exult along with thine inheritance." The reader will easily see that the words לְרֹאשׁוֹת בְּטוֹבָתָא (Liroth Betovath)

are improperly rendered in the common version, "that I may see the good;" for this refers to what goes before, "And visit me with thy salvation;" and how could he give as a reason, that he wished to be a mere spectator of the good of Israel? But these words signify "experience privileges," as well as "see good;" and David wished not merely to see, but to join in, and to experience the privileges of God's chosen people. As soon as he was restored to these ardently desired privileges, he showed a real activity—a holy joy and exultation in them, as might have been expected from his longing after them. He now proceeds with the account of Israel's wicked and faithless conduct, and Jehovah's ineffable goodness and mercy towards them, opening it with a solemn confession of the sins of his nation:—

6. We have sinned along with our fathers,
We have acted perversely, we have transgressed.
7. Our fathers in Egypt comprehended not thy wonders;
They remembered not the multitude of thy tender mercies;
But they rebelled at the sea—even at the Red Sea.
8. But He saved them for the sake of his name,
That He might manifest his mighty power.
9. So He rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up,
That he led them through the depths as in a desert.
10. And He saved them from the hand of the enemy,
And delivered them from the power of the adversary.

* It must, however, be borne in mind that David here speaks of Israel as the covenanted nation in general, and of the privileges of atonement, as having existed among them, and which were still in their possession, but for wicked Saul, who slew the priests of Nob, and caused the tabernacle services to cease for a time. When David prays to be made partaker of the accepted atonement of Jehovah's people, he must not refer to the atonement made on the last day of atonement on that year, but to the general fact that atonement was made for Israel by the High Priests, and that Jehovah was wont to accept them graciously. Of such he wishes to be made partaker, though at present there was none made. So when he wishes to rejoice with the joy of Jehovah's people, he refers to the blessed days when Israel rejoiced before the Lord, and looks forward to the time when he would make them again rejoice in Jehovah, and in their holy privileges.

11. When the waters covered their oppressors, that one of them
was not left,—
12. Then believed they His words—then sung they His praise.

We are not to expect any chronological exactness in the enumeration of some of the most grievous transgressions of Israel in the wilderness, as the Psalmist describes them in the succeeding verses; his design being rather to point out their exceeding sinfulness and aggravations, than the precise times and occasions when they were committed.

13. But they hasted to stray; they forgot his works;
They waited not upon his counsel;
14. And they were driven by their lusts in the wilderness,
And tempted God in the desert.
15. So he granted them their request;
But sent consumption into their bodies.
16. When they were envious with Moses in the camp—
With Aaron the consecrated of Jehovah:
17. The earth opened and swallowed Dathan,
And covered over the company of Abiram;
18. And a fire devoured their congregation:
A flame consumed the wicked.
19. In Horeb they made a calf, and worshipped that molten
image:
20. And changed their glory into the image of an ox that
eateth grass.
21. They forgot God their Saviour,
Who performed great things in Egypt,—
22. Wonders in the land of Ham—terrible marvels at the Red
Sea.
23. Then he spake of extirpating them;
Had not Moses his chosen stood in the breach before him, to
restrain his wrath from destroying."

As the provocations of Israel enumerated in verses 13—22 are taken up without their order and connection in sacred history, a brief explanatory reference to the same may not be out of place. Verse 13 expresses the astonishingly short period that elapsed between their witnessing the mighty wonders of God and their falling into idolatry: "They hasted to stray." The word מִהָרָה (*Miharu*) signifies a rash hurrying into misery (see Job v. 13), and refers here to Exod. xxxii. 8, "They have turned aside quickly out of the way." Last clause of verse 13, "They waited not upon his counsels," or "for his directions," *i.e.* which he gave to Moses during the forty days he was on the mount (see Exod. xxxii. 1.) Verse 14 refers to Numb. xi. 4—6; verse 15 refers to Numb. xi. 31—34; verses 16—18 refer to Numb. xvi. 1—3 and 25—35. From the 19th to the 22d inclusive. The history of their outrageous idolatry, hinted at in verse 13, is largely detailed in verses 19—22. The 23d refers to Exod. xxxii. 9—14, where we are told that

the Lord would have consumed Israel in a moment, but for the intercession of Moses. The figurative expression "to stand in the breach," is taken from that of an enemy who has succeeded in making an opening in the wall of a fortification, and is just ready to enter by it; but there comes a hero who places himself in the breach, and preventing the entrance of the destroyer, saves his endangered fellow-citizens.

24. Then they despised the delightful land ;
Not believing His word :
25. And they murmured in their tents,
Not obeying Jehovah's voice.
26. So he lifted up his hand against them,
To fell them in the wilderness ;
27. And to fell their seed among the heathen,
And to scatter them in the lands.
28. They also became attached to Baal-Peor,
And ate the sacrifices of the dead :
29. Thus they procured wrath by their vile practices,
That a pestilence broke out upon them.
30. Then Phinehas stood up and executed judgment ;
And thus the plague was restrained.
31. And this was counted to him for righteousness—
For all generations to come, even for ever.
32. At the waters of Meribah they also provoked him,
And Moses suffered for their sakes :
33. For they embittered his spirit, and he spake harshly with his
lips.

Thus far extends the description of Israel's provocations in the wilderness. In these verses three of the most heinous of their sins are specified. Verses 24 and 25 refer to the fearful rebellion which broke out on the return of the spies from Canaan, when they would rather return to Egypt than undertake to enter the promised land. In particular, the first clause of verse 24 refers to Numb. xiv. 1—4; and the second seems to refer to Numb. xiii. 2 specially, and to Jehovah's promises to the Patriarchs generally. Verse 25th is a repetition of the 24th, and alludes to the same event. Verse 26. "So he lifted up his hand against them," means, "He resolved by an oath against them," and refers to Numb. xiv. 21—23, 26—35. Verse 27 does not immediately refer to the provocation in Numbers, but to Deut. xxxi. 14—22, and xxxii.; and besides, it may also have relation to many other passages, in which the Lord foretells to the children of Israel their doom in consequence of apostacy, as He did to their fathers on the occasion of Numb. xiv. The great sin of Israel's idolatry with Baal-Peor—the plague—Phinehas executing judgment on the vile rebel Zimri—and Jehovah's promise to him, which is recorded in Numb. xxv. 1—14, form the subject of verses 28—31. Verses 32 and 33 refer to Numb. xx. 1—14. David now drops the history of Israel in the wilderness, and in verse 34 begins with their first sin in Canaan, which was, that they had disobeyed Jehovah's commandment, in not destroying the Canaanites in the land.

34. They destroyed not the nations,
Though Jehovah commanded them ;
35. And they were mingled with the heathen,
And learned their works ;
36. And served their idols ;
Which became a snare unto them.
37. They also sacrificed their sons and daughters to the devils.
38. Thus they shed innocent blood,
Even the blood of their sons and daughters,
Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan ;
So that the land was polluted with blood.
39. Thus were they defiled with their works,
And estranged by their wicked deeds.
40. Then Jehovah's wrath kindled against his nation,
That he abhorred his inheritance.
41. And He delivered them into the hand of the heathen,
That their enemies ruled over them.
42. So did their adversaries crush them,
That they were humbled under their hand.
43. Many times did He deliver them ;
But they rebelled in their consolation ;
And again were they brought low for their iniquity.
44. Again He beheld their affliction,
When He heard their sore cries :
45. And He remembered for them his covenant,
And He repented according to the vastness of his tender
mercies.
46. And He made them experience his compassion,
In the very presence of all their spoilers.

The whole of this part of the Psalm has particular reference to the Book of Judges. In fact, the second chapter of that Book, from verse 11 to the end, comprehends essentially the same subjects, with the exception of a few expressions regarding the abominable practices which they had learned from the Canaanites, and which are described in the 10th chapter of the same Book, verses 5—16. Some suppose that captivity is mentioned in verse 46, but this arises from a misunderstanding of the verse ; for how could "captivity" be here spoken of, seeing that in the whole part not a single word is mentioned of Israel having been carried captive, nor was this ever the case with them during the days of the Judges, to which period this part of the Psalm alludes ? The words that make out the first clause of verse 46, **וַיִּתֵּן אוֹתָם לְרַחֲמִים** (*Vayiten Otham Lerachmim*), mean, "He made them the objects of compassion," *i.e.* again He visited them with his compassion, or as we have rendered it, "He made them experience His compassion, **לִפְנֵי כָּל שׁוֹבְהֵהֶם** (*Liphney Kol Shovehem*), before," or "in the presence of all those who spoiled them," *i.e.* though surrounded with enemies on every side, who could have swallowed them up in a moment, still, in His compassion, He preserved them—He raised up to

them Judges as Ehud, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Deborah, Samuel, and many others, who made them defy their enemies and dwell in safety. David then concludes the Psalm by offering up a prayer, ardent though brief, for himself and those that were with him, exiles from their country, that the Lord would extend His mercy and compassion to them also, as He did to their fathers, and would deliver them from their exile, and bring them back to Judea, that they might enjoy the privileges of His covenant people, and be enabled to praise Him in His sanctuary for His mercy and grace. To this he adds a sublime doxology.

47. Save us, O Jehovah, our God,
And gather us from among the heathen ;
That we may render thanks to thy holy name—
That we may glory in thy praise.
48. Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel,
From eternity to eternity ;
And let the whole nation say, Amen.
Hallelujah, praise ye the Lord.

The following Psalm is naturally divided into five parts, each part treating of particular deliverances which the Lord so often makes men experience, and which they are reminded of by David, in order that they may render due thanks to the God of mercies, and show forth his praise among their fellow men.

PS. CVII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XXXIX.

INTRODUCTION.

1. O render thanks unto Jehovah, for He is good,
For His mercy lasteth for ever.
2. So shall the redeemed of Jehovah exclaim,
Whom he hath redeemed from the power of misery.
3. And gathered them from the lands, from the east and from the west,
From the north and from the south.

These three verses contain the basis of this most excellent poem. The redeemed of Jehovah, who have experienced His goodness and mercy—who have tasted and seen that he is good—who have found in Him a ready help in time of trouble, when there was none to deliver—are called upon by the Psalmist and exhorted to render thanks to Jehovah, to acknowledge that he is good, and that His goodness lasts for ever.

Some commentators, and especially some modern German critics, at the head of whom is Dr Hengstenberg, maintain, from the 2d and 3d verses, that this Psalm was composed on the occasion of Israel's return from the Babylonish captivity. This opinion is built upon a false foundation, "for they join the last clause of the 2d verse, "whom he redeemed from the power of misery," to the "gathering from the lands" of the 3d verse, and make out of them a "returning from

a captivity." Let us shortly examine this idea, and see if it will stand for a moment. First of all, what would be thought of a poet who would open a Psalm by calling upon *returned captives* to praise God for their great deliverance, and who, after having introduced the subject of which he was professedly to treat, would fall immediately into a record of stories of other parties with which the *captives*, of whose history he was to sing, had nothing to do? To illustrate this argument, let us consider briefly the four special parts of this Psalm, and the saved subjects represented in them, and see if the Babylonian captives had been in circumstances at all similar to theirs. From the 4th to the 9th verse the straying and bewildered wanderer in a pathless desert is spoken of; what have the Babylonian captives to do with that? or when did they lose themselves in a desert? Surely the Babylonian soldiers who conducted the Jews captive, knew their road better from Jerusalem to Babylon than thus to lose it. From the 10th to the 17th verse, not a common captive of war, but a miserable prisoner in a dark dungeon, shut up within iron gates and brazen bars, forms the subject of description. This was not the case with the Babylonish captives in general. Some of them might, nay must, have been bound while on their captive journey; but in Babylon we know that they were a free colony during all the seventy years. But that this opinion is erroneous will be seen still farther from the 14th verse, where the enlargement of the prisoner from his dungeon and chains is described, without a single word being said either as to his belonging to a particular country, or returning to it. The Babylonian captives, therefore, can have nothing to do with this part of the Psalm. From verse 17th to the 22d, the sore afflicted, sick, and dying man is spoken of. What have the captives to do with this? When was the whole captive nation of Israel sick and dying in Babylon? Where does the sacred history mention anything about such an occurrence? From verse 23 to verse 31, the foundering seaman in a storm forms the subject. What have the captive Israelites to do with this? When were they thus endangered? Or on the bosom of what sea were they conveyed to and from Babylon? From the Books of Kings, Ezra, and Nehemiah we learn that they went thither and returned by land. The fifth part of the Psalm, which speaks of the ways of God in general, does not contain a single word which could in any manner be applied to the captivity. How unreasonable and absurd, therefore, is it, from two words of the introduction to form an opinion of the Psalm, which the Psalm itself contradicts throughout.

But Dr Hengstenberg having adopted the notion that the 105th and 106th Psalms refer to the period of the captivity, is constrained, for consistency's sake, to assign the 107th to the same period also. He doubts, however, whether they be the composition of the same person at a particular time; nor does he see, that altogether they form one entire subject. He sets aside, without scruple, the authority of 1 Chron. xvi., which expressly ascribes the authorship of the two former to David. But even if they were destitute of internal evidence of being Davidic (which we have elsewhere proved that they are not), and if the xvi. of 1 Chronicles contained no express statement to this effect; still the fact would remain that in neither of them is there a single allusion to the history of Israel all along from the time of David to the captivity, and that all the historical references which they do contain end with the period of the Judges. We ask then, how could it be possible for these Psalms to have been written after the return from the captivity, without the author's making the slightest allusion

to Israel's history during the intervening centuries from the time of David?

The reader cannot fail to perceive that David's grand object in the two historical Psalms (though, as we have said, he composed them primarily for his own consolation when an exile in Philistia) was to exhort the nation of Israel as the covenant people of God to praise Him for his goodness and mercy towards them in times past. The first opens with this call, "O give praise unto Jehovah, call upon his name," &c.; and then he summons them specially, as being the seed of the Patriarchs with whom the covenant was made, and to whom the Lord showed such faithfulness and mercy, to thank God for it. He next describes, in the body of the Psalm, the great wonders by which the Lord led the seed of Abraham in ancient times, which was a strong reason why they should continually praise such a merciful God; and he concludes by stating that all that the Lord had thus done for them was with the purpose, that "they should observe His ordinances and keep to His laws." And in the 106th Psalm, the fearful conduct of Israel, both in the wilderness and in the times of the Judges, is delineated—how often they had provoked their merciful God to anger, and how often He had pardoned their sins, and extended mercy to them in time of trouble; which was another reason why they, as a nation, should worship and praise Him for His general goodness and mercy towards them in times past. As those two Psalms were a call to the nation as such, to praise God for covenant blessings and national deliverances, so the 107th invites private individuals, who in any way might have experienced the Divine goodness and mercy in time of need, to join the praising congregations, and openly thank God for the same. This Psalm appropriately follows up the former two, and shows that not only was Israel as a nation deeply indebted to the Great God, but that every one of them individually must have experienced His ineffable goodness and mercy, in one way or another, in the course of Providence; for which, therefore, they were bound to praise Him publicly, and make known "His works of wonder to the children of men." But where were these thanksgivings to be offered? Was it in the towns or villages to which the individuals addressed, respectively belonged? No, it was where the tabernacle and the altar stood—where great congregations gathered together to serve the Lord—as is apparent from verses 22 and 32, "And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgivings, and declare his works with shouting joy." "Let them also exalt him in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders." Thus we see that the redeemed individuals spoken of in this Psalm as debtors to God for mercies received, were called upon to assemble from all parts of Palestine, at the place where the altar stood, to offer their sacrifices, and to praise God in the great congregations. Let us now read the first three verses of the Psalm which form the introduction to the whole of it: "O render thanks unto Jehovah, for he is good, for his mercy lasteth for ever. So shall the redeemed of Jehovah exclaim whom he hath redeemed from the power of misery: and gathered them from the lands," or "from all the provinces," *i.e.* of Judea, to the place where the altar stood, "from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south." In the 44th verse of Psalm cv., the Psalmist says, "And He gave to them the *lands*, or the provinces, of the heathen . . . that they might observe his ordinances." Hence we see, that by the plural "*lands*," he means nothing else than the

different provinces of Palestine, from which the Lord, in His Providence, might bring His saved children, whether from the east, west, north, or south, to the place where His altar stood, and where great congregations gathered, that they might render thanks to Him for His goodness and mercy toward them as a nation; and also for the particular deliverances they might have experienced individually; which different deliverances are afterwards treated in their order. This is the primary import of the Psalm; but we have no hesitation in stating it as our opinion, that as Israel were the typical Church of God, and were to gather themselves together from the four corners of their land to praise Him for his works of wonder towards them, so the Spirit who inspired the composer of this Psalm intended that it should also refer to the spiritual Israel, gathered from among all nations and tongues, from many different and distant lands, into the heavenly Zion, into the spiritual sanctuary, to praise Jehovah for His mysterious works of wonder towards the children of men, in a slain and risen Saviour. "Many," said the blessed Jesus, "shall come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Matt. viii. 11; Luke xiii. 29. David then proceeds to describe the different parties to whom he refers in the introduction, as gathering themselves to God's tabernacle and altar to praise him in the great congregations.

PART FIRST.

4. Those who wandered in the wilderness,—in the pathless desert;
Who could not discover any city of habitation.
5. Hungry and thirsty, that their soul within them was overwhelmed;
6. But who cried aloud to Jehovah in their distress,
That He should deliver them from their oppressions.
7. And He directed them in a straight path,
That they might walk on to a habitable city.
8. Such shall acknowledge unto Jehovah His tender mercy,
And His works of wonder to the children of men:—
9. That He hath satisfied the languishing soul;
And the hungry soul He hath filled with good.

Here we have the deliverance of one company described, who, when they have experienced Jehovah's goodness in such a wonderful manner, are called upon to come forward from all parts of the country where they may happen to have their abode, and make a public confession, at the place mentioned in verse 22, *i.e.* where they offer their thank-offerings. Verse 4. "Those who wandered," or, strayed in the wilderness, in the pathless desert, so בִּישִׁמוֹן דָּרֵךְ (Bishimon Darech) signifies, (compare Deut. xxxii. 10; Ps. lxxviii. 7, lxxviii. 40; Isa. xliii. 19, 20; and for the same spiritual application, Isa. xl. 3, xli. 17, 18, xlii. 16, &c.) Verse 8. "Such יודו לַיהוָה חַסְדּוֹ (Yodu La Jehovah Chasdo) "shall acknowledge unto Jehovah his tender mercy, and his works of wonder," *they shall acknowledge* "to the children of men," *i.e.* they shall make an open confession of what Jehovah has done for them; and the confession shall be made in the place

mentioned in verse 22, and before those mentioned in verse 32. The deliverance spoken of in this part of the Psalm, Israel as a nation had experienced in the wilderness during forty years; and the spiritual Israel of God experience it still in the wilderness of this world, and they are surely called upon to fulfil their duty as laid before them in the 8th and 9th verses of this Psalm. David and his men might have oftentimes experienced it temporally when he fled from Saul, and had to traverse dreary and pathless deserts; but David experienced it still oftener spiritually when fleeing from the enemy of his soul—the roaring lion; and he was ready to acknowledge it openly and publicly, as indeed he did, as soon as he was able to come to the proper place where such confession was to be made,—he said, “Come, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what He hath done for my soul.” As such, he calls here upon his countrymen who might have experienced individually the same, to fulfil their duty in a public and solemn manner.

PART SECOND.

10. Those who sat in darkness, and in the shadow of death,
Fettered in misery and iron;
11. Because they had perverted the words of God,
And contemned the counsel of the Most High:
12. Wherefore he crushed their heart with calamity:
Now they fell down, and there was no succour.
13. But who cried aloud unto Jehovah in their distress,
That He should save them from their oppressions.
14. So He brought them forth from the darkness and shadow of
death,
And brake asunder their fetters:
15. Such shall acknowledge unto Jehovah His tender mercy,
And His works of wonder to the children of men.
16. That He brake the gates of brass, and shivered the iron bars.

The miserable prisoners fettered in iron, in a dark dungeon, are represented in verse 11 as suffering on account of their rebellion against God and His law; “Because they had perverted,” or exchanged, “the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the Most High.” The Lord laid before Israel the good and the evil—life and death—the blessing and the curse—and counselled them again and again in the books of Moses. Now, if this part of the Psalm were supposed to have an exclusive reference to any period in Israel’s history, we would not need to go far to find when it was fulfilled. The Book of Judges, to which (and no farther down) David referred in the two former Psalms, would show how often Israel rebelled against Jehovah, and perverted His law, and despised His counsel, for which He delivered them into the fetters of misery and iron until their heart was crushed, and they cried unto the Lord, who sent them deliverance, and broke the gates of brass and the bars of iron, and rent their fetters asunder. (Comp. Judges iii. 7—16, iv. v. 6—11, vi. 1—16, x. 6—18.) But the fact is, that there is no national nor general reference, as such, throughout in this Psalm; it is of universal application to individuals who

may have experienced such things, and which individuals are therefore called upon by the Psalmist to improve them ; for they were evidently not designed by the righteous and merciful God for their harm, but for their spiritual welfare, because otherwise He would have allowed them to perish in their misery.

PART THIRD.

17. Those who were stupified from the course of their transgression,
And were afflicted because of their iniquity :
18. When their souls abhorred all sorts of food,
And they drew near to the gates of death :
19. But who cried aloud unto Jehovah in their distress,
That He should save them from their oppressions.
20. So He sent His word and healed them,
And delivered them from the threatened destruction.
21. Such shall acknowledge unto Jehovah His tender mercy,
And His works of wonder to the children of men.
22. And they shall sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving,
And proclaim his works with triumphant joy.

The sublimity and power of this part of the Psalm will best be seen when compared with the original passages whence the image here is taken (see Job xxxiii. 14, to the end of the chapter ; Lev. xiv. 1—32 ; and also our exposition on the law of the leper in the publication on the Old Testament Scriptures.) The delivered party here is represented as having been “ stupified by the course of their transgression.” Sin is not only abominable in itself, it is also a dangerous and infectious disease ; it hardens, engrosses, and stupifies, and when it has once got power over a man, it leads him downward to destruction. The sting of sin is death, as well temporal as spiritual. The provoked, but still long-suffering and merciful God, brings the criminal to the foretaste of death—He lays him on the bed of scourging pain, and permits the disease to grow so fearfully that the sinner abhors the very first law of nature, that of preserving life, and his soul draws near the gates of death. But all this is not intended to destroy, but to save, for as soon as the sinner is humbled and prays, God heals and restores. After such a visitation, the rescued individual is called upon to watch, to improve the lesson, and to render open and public confession and thanks to Jehovah for His tender mercy exercised towards him. The reason why the sacrifices of thanksgiving are mentioned here and not in the two former instances is, not because that the former were not to bring thank-offerings, but because in this particular case sacrifices were enjoined in the law (see Lev. xiv. 1—22, and our exposition thereof, as mentioned above.) In the other cases, the subjects of deliverance are left to learn their duty from this, where it is expressly commanded.

PART FOURTH.

23. Those who traverse the sea in ships—
Who transact business in the mighty waters ;
24. Even those who have witnessed the operations of Jehovah,
And His works of wonder in the vast deep.
25. When He commanded, and a tempestuous storm arose,
Which drove its billows aloft.
26. They are towered up towards the skies—
They hurl down into the depths :
Their soul melteth away in midst of distress.
27. They reel and stagger like a drunken man,
And all their wisdom is swallowed up.
28. But who cried aloud unto Jehovah in their distress,
That he should draw them forth of their misery.
29. So He arrested the tempest to make it a calm,
And the billows assuaged.
30. And they rejoiced when they were calmed ;
And He brought them then unto their desired haven.
31. Such shall acknowledge unto Jehovah His tender mercy,
And His works of wonder to the children of men.
32. Let them extol Him in the assembly of the people,
And let them praise Him in the session of the elders.

It is utterly impossible for the translator to do justice to this magnificent part of the Psalm, which is written in the loftiest style of poetry, and which, with the exception of two passages in the song of Ila-bakkuk, has no parallel in imagery and grandeur. Verse 23. "Those who traverse the sea," or who descend to sea, *i.e.* leave the high land, and go into their ships in order to traverse the sea. "Who transact business," or "make trade." Verse 27. "And all their wisdom is swallowed up;" *i.e.* all the experience and discretion which they had formerly acquired are now unavailing; drowned in distress, lost in despair. Verse 29. "So He arrested the tempest to make it a calm," or "into a calm," *i.e.* Jehovah arrests the tempest in its furious career, bidding it "Stop," "be still." Verse 32. "In the session," or sitting, "of the elders;" *i.e.* where the elders of Israel assembled for praising God.

PART FIFTH.

33. He turneth the floods into a wilderness,
And water fountains into thirsty ground :
34. A fruitful land into a salted soil,
For the wickedness of its inhabitants.
35. He turneth a desert into a water pool,
And a dry land into springs of water.
36. And He settled therein the hungry,
Who built them a city for habitation.

37. Then they sowed fields and planted vineyards,
And produced fruit of increase.
38. He also blessed them, that they multiplied exceedingly ;
Even their cattle he suffered not to diminish.
39. When again they were diminished and humbled,
It was from an accumulation of wickedness and grievance.
40. He poureth contempt upon princes,
And causeth them to wander in a pathless desert.
41. While he fortified the helpless against affliction,
And made them families like flocks.
42. The upright shall behold it and be glad ;
And all iniquity shall stop her mouth.
43. Who is wise enough to observe these things,
That the tender mercies of Jehovah may be fully understood ?

From verse 33 to 39 inclusive, David speaks of the works of God in general, without alluding to any particular thing or event in Israel's history. Though verses 33 and 34 could be illustrated by a reference to the destruction of the cities of the plain, and the passage from verse 35 to 39, by Israel's vicissitudes during the time of the Judges (if a few expressions only were considered figuratively), or even by the experience of David and his men during their wanderings in hunger and thirst from desert to desert ; yet, at the same time, we cannot mistake the generality of the language, and see that David speaks of the universal ways of Jehovah in his mysterious providence. So likewise, there can be no doubt that verse 40 refers to Saul, upon whom Jehovah poured contempt, and allowed to wander in a pathless desert—to fall headlong into iniquity, murder, and destruction. Verse 41st refers to David himself, and to the Lord's having fortified him against all his enemies ; for he was now secured within the fortification of Ziklag, and his family, as well as those of his men who dwelt with him, increased like flocks. In the two closing verses the upright and wise men are called upon to behold these wonderful transactions of God—to watch and observe carefully the state of matters between David—whose army increased daily by the mightiest men of Israel joining him from all the tribes (1 Chron. xii. 1—23)—and Saul, who became more and more confounded and miserable ; that they might learn to discover the tender mercies of God in his independent and omniscient government of the universe.

Before we bring the history of David's exile to a close, we shall shortly consider his real condition in Philistia during the whole period of his residence there. When he saw that Saul, by means of his spies, had traced him out everywhere, and was acquainted with his hiding-places, even in the remotest deserts, and that he could place no reliance on his solemn promise, which had been repeatedly violated, he felt himself compelled to take refuge in the land of Philistia. His ardent patriotism, and his devoted regard to his fatherland and his countrymen, especially because of the relationship of both to Jehovah, the God whom he so loved, and to the

covenants made with the Patriarchs, and because of the ark of the covenant, the law, commandments, statutes, and ordinances—the reader will have seen from the previous part of the narrative, but particularly from those of his inspired songs which have been already considered. The attentive Christian reader of the Bible will perceive one distinctive feature in all the accounts of the saints, from Abraham, the father of the faithful, down to the apostle Paul, viz., that they all used whatever means were in their power which they deemed warrantable, for avoiding threatened or impending danger. Even those prophets and apostles who were so strong in faith, and so conscious of the aid of the Almighty whom they served, as to command even the dead to arise—even they considered it presumption to neglect the use of all the means placed by providence within their reach for their preservation; for then only could they reasonably expect that the great Watchman of Israel would interpose by his Almighty power to guard them. To have acted otherwise would have argued a presumptuous and sinful confidence; and in the event of their having been overtaken by the threatened danger, they would have been accessory to their own death. It was therefore David's duty to flee for his life, and to do all that in him lay to protect himself against imminent danger from Saul. Moreover, there can be no doubt that if, in these circumstances, he could have found personal security in any other neighbouring country, he would have preferred it to Philistia, which was the most bitter and deadly enemy of his nation. The motives which led Achish the Philistian king to grant shelter to David and his men, were the very opposite of disinterested and generous. He thus acted, not that he might protect a brave and ruthlessly persecuted man, but out of hatred to Israel, because the latter would be thereby deprived of the services of a great and valiant general who, with his men, had so often stood in the gap, and driven back his own invading troops; and in the hope also that he would betray his country, and thus become bound to him for ever. David could not but penetrate Achish's motives and policy; and however much the thought might grieve him, still as Philistia was the only place where he could be secure from Saul, he had no alternative but to remain. The town of Ziklag was assigned by Achish to David and his men as their place of residence, and with this exception they were not farther indebted to him, for they procured their own subsistence by the power of the sword. From Ziklag they made various incursions into some of those nations which God had doomed to extirpation by the Israelites on account of their wickedness. These were the Geshurites, the Gezrites, and the Amalekites, who dwelt on the south of Judea near the borders of Egypt; and they were compelled to keep it in secret by all means, in order that no tidings might reach king Achish, who, if he had known how and whence they obtained their supplies—not by the spoiling of Israel, but of the neighbouring heathen nations—might have turned against them, and destroyed them with their families. When David returned from such expeditions, Achish used to ask him, "Where have you made the incursion at this time?" (1 Sam. xxvii. 10; we give the literal meaning of the original), to which he answered, "Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites." As the heathen nations which David had smitten did actually dwell to the south of Judah, this reply contained the literal truth; but Achish understood it otherwise, and most gladly concluded that the incursions were made upon the Israelites who dwelt there, saying to those

around him, "He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever." xxvii. 12.*

But David's situation in Philistia soon became critical and dangerous. Achish prepared an army for a fresh invasion of Israel, without consulting the former in the matter at all; and, when he was ready to take the field, said to him in a haughty and imperious tone (fully calculating on his treachery), "Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to the camp,† thou and thy men." 1 Sam. xxviii. 1. This order perplexed him exceedingly; for how was he now to act? A direct refusal, on the one hand, would doubtless have exposed him to the greatest immediate danger; and, on the other, how could he engage to join the idolatrous and wicked king in shedding the blood of his countrymen? He therefore replied, "Surely thou shalt know what thy servant will do;" and Achish was satisfied, and gave him flattering assurances. But this answer was still more ambiguous than that given on the former occasion, for, if we examine carefully its meaning, we will find it to be somewhat to the following effect: Thou, the idolatrous and deadly enemy of my country, orderest me to act in a manner abhorrent to natural feeling, to conscience, patriotism, humanity, and honour—thou orderest me, who have twice spared the life of Saul, my relentless persecutor, to go along with thee and fight against him in open war, and shed the innocent blood of my brethren, the covenanted

* We are aware that some expositors and critics denounce this ambiguous reply of David to Achish as a deceit, while others hesitate not to designate it a *lie*. But we maintain that it was neither the one nor the other, and that he could not have acted in the circumstances more prudently than he did. When Samuel was commanded by God to go to Bethlehem and anoint one of Jesse's sons to be king, he objected on the ground of the danger he would incur at the hand of Saul; but God said, "Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord." 1 Sam. xvi. 2. This was a striking instance of the use of ordinary means being resorted to, whereby to avoid danger; for Samuel was in the habit of going from place to place each year to sacrifice to the Lord, and therefore there was no need for any miraculous interposition in his behalf. He was afraid of Saul, and God himself told him to go, and to proclaim a sacrificial feast as he was accustomed to do, and by this means he would remove suspicion from Saul's mind. When Paul went bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem, he was advised by his brethren there (Acts xxi. 20—26) to perform certain ceremonies of the law, in order to avoid the rage of the Jews; and he accordingly did so, in company with the four men mentioned in the passage referred to, though he well knew, and had everywhere taught, that since the great Sacrifice—the Antitype of all the sacrifices—had been offered, the types were abolished and useless. These are two instances of means having been used in order to escape danger and appease malignant passions; for in ordinary circumstances Samuel would not have gone at the time he did to sacrifice in Bethlehem, nor would Paul have performed those legal ceremonies which he knew were entirely useless. We must consider, however, that the God of truth himself recommended to Samuel the means which he adopted; while Paul, who was not terrified at the prospect of death in any form, for the sake of Christ, thought it his duty to use the means suggested by his brethren, for the purpose of confounding the cruel and blood-thirsty Jews.

Now, to the above cases we add that of David, and maintain that these three holy men, in acting as they did, committed no more sin than the angels at Sodom, who smote the wicked men who were at the door of Lot's house with blindness, so that they were confounded, and could not find where the door was. Gen. xix. 5—11. David was now entirely in the power of a murderous and idolatrous prince, who would have him to betray and destroy his nation, and but for the hope that he would do so, would most probably have sacrificed him. When therefore the latter returned from his inroads, and Achish interrogated him as to where he had been, he did not reply, "I have killed so many of my countrymen, and destroyed so many of their cities," but sought to escape the dangerous query by answering it in a brief and ambiguous manner; for, although his reply, "Against the south of Judah," &c., was literally true, yet it admitted of a double interpretation, and it remained with Achish to understand it as it suited him best.

† *בִּמַּחֲנֶיהָ* (*Bamachneh*) means "camp," and not, as it is rendered, "battle."

people of God; therefore "thou shalt know what thy servant will do"—wait till the day of battle, and then thou shalt see whether I will fight for, or against my brethren. But the Philistian princes entertained strong suspicions of David when they found him in the camp, and resolved that he should be immediately dismissed. However opposed to the mind of Achish this step was, he was obliged to yield to their remonstrances, and sent him away accordingly, but with the highest assurances of his consideration and esteem. Thus had David reason once more to praise his faithful God for interposing to deliver him from a situation equally delicate and perilous.

On returning to Ziklag, with his men, from the Philistian camp, he found that it had been utterly destroyed and burnt with fire by a band of, Amalekites who had invaded the south, and that they had carried captive all their wives and children. This terrible and unexpected calamity threw David into a state of extreme distress and perplexity, for he had not only to mourn his own loss, but his people, in their grief and despair, threatened to kill him. In these disastrous circumstances, however, he remembered that he had a Friend above who had often delivered him in times of trouble, and in whom he still trusted; and "he encouraged himself in Jehovah his God." Having called Abiathar to him with the Ephod, he enquired of the Lord, "Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them?" And the Lord answered, "Pursue; for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all." 1 Sam. xxx. 1—8. David's forces having been materially strengthened by a goodly number of valiant officers of the tribe of Manasseh, who joined him on his return from the camp to Ziklag (see 1 Chron. xii. 20, 21), he immediately set out in pursuit of the Amalekite robbers. Two hundred of his men, however, became so fatigued by the rapidity of his march, that he was obliged to leave them behind at the brook Beser. With the remainder he hastened on, and having unexpectedly procured by the way the guidance of a young Egyptian, whom the enemy in their retreat had abandoned as sick, he speedily came down on the very place where they had encamped. In fancied security, they had given themselves over to riotous feasting, rejoicing in the great booty which they had carried off from the different quarters they had invaded. Taking advantage of their disordered position, David instantly fell on them, "and smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day; and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled. And he recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away, and rescued his two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all." xxx. 17—19. They returned with their spoil to the brook where the two hundred men had been left; but when he proposed an equal division of the spoil among all his men—those who remained by the brook as well as those who had borne all the danger and fatigue—some evil-minded among the latter withstood him, saying, that the former should receive nothing at all. However, he overcame their opposition ultimately, and his proposal was carried into effect. When he returned to Ziklag, he sent of his share of the spoil to his friends among the elders of Judah, saying, "Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord;" and also to "all the places where he and his men were wont to haunt." xxx. 26, 31.

While David was thus victorious, matters had been meanwhile far different with Saul. His ungodly and bloody career came at last to a gloomy and terrible end, on the mountains of Gilboa. When he surveyed from thence the mighty and formidable Philistian host, his heart melted within him, and a fearful foreboding of his miserable doom created an agonizing despair in his soul. Then did he remember that there was a great God in heaven, who alone could grant miraculous deliverance to Israel, as He had often done before. That God, whose priests he had so foully and impudently slaughtered, he now tried to supplicate and to ask counsel of, but it was in vain; He would not hear, nor answer either by prophet, or by dream, or by the Oracle. In his despair he had recourse to the wretched expedient of witchcraft, and disguising himself, sought the aid of the woman of Endor, that had a familiar spirit. Her he persuaded to bring up the venerable Samuel, whose counsels he had formerly rejected, and whose calm and mysterious rest he now disturbed.* It pleased God, in his mysterious providence, to administer to him His last rebuke by the same messenger who had, many years before, anointed him to be king over Israel. Samuel showed him his aggravated folly and crime in forcing God, as it were, to answer him, and that by the prohibited and abominable means of witchcraft. "Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?" xxviii. 16. He was farther informed of his miserable fate, that he and his sons, who were in the camp, would fall on the morrow, and Israel be delivered into the hand of the Philistines. Terrified and heart-stricken, the humbled monarch returned to his camp. Next day his army was routed, his sons were killed—the eldest being the generous and noble Jonathan—and himself sorely wounded. To avoid being captured by the enemy, he killed himself with his own sword; and his armour-bearer (who, according to Jewish tradition, was Doeg the Edomite) followed his master's example. (See Psalm xxxvii., or Chron. xxxv. 14, 15.) "So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men"—that is, all his associates and friends and counsellors—"that same day together." 1 Sam. xxxi. 6.

On the third day after the return of David and his men to Ziklag with their spoil, tidings were brought them of Israel's disastrous defeat, and of the death of Saul and his sons. David's heart was deeply moved, especially at the loss of Jonathan, his beloved and faithful friend, and he "took hold on his clothes and rent them; and likewise all the men that were with him. And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword." 2 Sam. i. 11, 12. David forgot the injustice and persecutions he had suffered at the hand of Saul, and only grieved that the king of Israel, the anointed of God, the once generous, valiant, and victorious warrior, should have perished thus miserably; and that his noble and affectionate brother Jonathan, should have also fallen on the same fatal field. He gave utterance to the feelings

* The whole transaction of that night is dark, as was the night itself. It was the power of darkness that Saul resorted to; but that power was subdued and superseded by a Divine vision, miracle, and revelation, and the wretched pair received their due for their mad presumption, as did Balak and Balaam. As this gloomy transaction stands in close connection with the whole history of Balaam, and some other passages besides, an ample consideration of it would form matter for a separate work.

of his burdened soul in the following sublime and deeply pathetic Lament (1 Sam. i. 19—27):—

Art thou a roe, O Israel,
That thou wast slain upon thy towering mountains? *
O how have the heroes fallen !
O tell it not in Gath ;
Publish it not in the streets of Askelon :
Lest the daughters of the Philistines should rejoice !
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised should exult !
O ye mountains of Gilboa ! O ye elevated fields ! †
Let neither dew nor rain descend upon you :
For there the shield of the mighty was dashed away,
Even the shield of Saul, as if not anointed with oil.
Without the blood of the slain—without the fat of the mighty,
Jonathan's bow never bent back ; ‡
Nor did ever Saul's sword return in vain.
Saul and Jonathan, who were beloved by each other, and pleasant ;
Who neither in their lives nor in their death were separated,
Were swifter than eagles ; were stronger than lions.
O ye daughters of Israel ! mourn ye over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet, with delightful ornaments ;
Who raised embroideries of gold upon your garments.
O how have the heroes fallen in the midst of the battle !
O Jonathan ! how wast thou slain upon thy towering mountains !
I am distressed for thee, O my brother Jonathan !
Thou wast exceedingly delightful unto me :
Thy affection for me far excelled the affection of woman. §

* The roe, or antelope, was always regarded as an emblem of beauty and agility, and because of its swiftness it was not easily pursued on the flat country. The hunter had to follow it to the high mountains, and when he succeeded in chasing it into a craggy place, precipitous on one side, whence there could be no escape, it resorted to no means of self-defence, but fixing its eyes on its persecutor, passively awaited its fate. David begins his lament with a reference to Israel in general, after which he turns to Saul, and then to Jonathan. "Upon thy towering mountains," i.e., the mountains of Gilboa where the fatal battle took place.

+ "O ye elevated fields!" so עֲדָרֵי תְּרֻמוֹת (Seder Therumoth) must signify, for "fields of offerings" have no business here; and the change which the phrase undergoes in translation requires the order in which we have put the "elevated fields," viz., immediately after the "mountains of Gilboa." The reason why the poet thus apostrophizes these places is, "For there the shield of the mighty was dashed away," or flung away, i.e., by the force with which the javelin was thrown against the shield, which caused it to drop from the hand of the mighty. Shields were always anointed with oil, in order that the javelins or spears which were dashed at them might glide smoothly off, instead of piercing or ejecting them from the hand. Hence David says, that Saul's shield was flung or dashed away, as if it had not been anointed with oil.

‡ "Bent back;" after having sent forth its arrow, it never bent back without having pierced the fat, and shed the blood of the mighty against whom it was aimed.

§ David here contrasts the steadfast attachment of the generous Jonathan with the falsehood and faithlessness of his sister Michal. The latter was David's wife; but as soon as her father had driven him into exile, she allowed herself to be given away to another husband, and forgot David entirely, as history proves. But Jonathan, we know, remained his faithful

O how have the heroes fallen !
 O how perished with them the instruments of war !*

Israel's condition, after the fatal and destructive battle of Gilboa, was lamentable and desperate. On the succeeding day, when the conquerors returned to strip the slain, they found amongst the heaps of their victims the bodies of Saul and his three sons, which they took and nailed to the wall of Bethshan, as a proud trophy of their triumph, but a spectacle of lamentation and woe to Israel. They cut off the king's head, which, along with his armour, they sent round about their country, and exhibited in the temples of their gods. The Israelites were deprived of a great portion of their territory ; and their misery and helplessness were so great, that even when those of them who dwelt on the other side of Jordan heard of the disastrous tidings, fear of the rage and cruelty of the Philistines so overwhelmed them, that they fled as exiles into other lands, whilst the enemy took possession of their cities. 1 Sam. xxxi. 7—10. Though we are not informed how many cities were destroyed, nor of the numbers who were carried into slavery, yet from the deadly enmity which the former bore to Israel, we may infer, that in both cases they would be very great.

The broken-hearted David must have deeply sympathized with his brethren in their misery, and the more so, that he was then living in the midst of their murderous foes. The xlv. Psalm seems to have been composed by him on this occasion, and intended as a national lamentation. Its language and poetical style are decisive of its being his, although, from the circumstances, it is of a more general character than those Psalms usually are which bear exclusive reference to himself. It consists of two parts divided by one *Selah* : the first of which celebrates Jehovah's goodness and mercy, and the protection and deliverances which He had made them experience in former days—and the last consists of dismal complaints of their present desperate and down-trodden condition, and supplications for the Divine merciful interposition.

PS. XLIV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XL.

(*Lamnatzeach*) "To the Chief Cause of all Events."

(*Maskil*) "A serious song of contemplation."

"To be performed by the sons of Korah."

1. O God ! with our ears we have heard,
 Our fathers have told us,

and affectionate friend and brother to the very last, and evinced his deep regard for him, on one occasion, at the imminent hazard of his life. David had therefore good reason to say, that Jonathan's affection for him far excelled the affection of woman.

* "The instruments of war" mean the "heroes" mentioned in the preceding line. The expression is used metaphorically, *i.e.*, that in, and with these fallen heroes, Israel's instruments of war had perished—they had left none behind like them with whom Israel could meet an enemy.

- What great works thou hast performed in their days,
Even in the days of old.
2. Thou, with thine hand, hast driven out heathen,
And hast planted them ;
The nations thou hast broken down,
But them thou hast engrafted.*
 3. For not by their sword have they got possession of the land,
Nor did their own arm save them ;
No, but by thy right hand—
Thine arm, and the light of thy countenance ;
For thou lovedst them.
 4. Thou art He, O God, my King :
Command now deliverance for Jacob.
 5. In thee alone we shall pierce through our oppressors ;
In thy name alone we shall tread down our adversaries.
 6. For not in my bow will I put confidence—
My sword will not help me :
 7. When thou shalt have saved us from our oppressors—
When thou hast put to shame our enemies.
 8. In God we have made our boast all day long,
And thy eternal name we shall praise, Selah, continually.

The whole of this first part of the Psalm is intended to represent Israel's utter inability to effect any deliverance for themselves by their own operations. It shows that from the beginning of their existence as a nation to that time, it was God alone who saved them, who made them stand against their oppressors, and who delivered them in time of trouble ; and that, therefore, they must ascribe all things past, to His omnipotence, goodness, and mercy ; as they would also do, if in their present disastrous condition He would send them deliverance. In the second part, the miseries of the nation are represented, and the house of Israel recommended to Jehovah's tender compassion.

9. Yet now hast thou rejected us and put us to shame,
And goest not forth along with our hosts.
10. Thou madest us retreat before our oppressors,
That our enemies spoiled us at their pleasure.
11. Thou hast delivered us to be devoured like sheep ;
And among heathen thou hast scattered us.
12. Thou hast sold thy people for no great sum,
And hast not made large the price of them.
13. Thou madest us a reproach to our neighbours,
A scorn and derision to those around us.

* The two clauses of this verse stand in regular contrast. The first has the figure of rooting out one kind of trees and planting another ; as the Canaanites were rooted out of Palestine and Israel was planted in their stead (comp. Ps. lxxx. 8.) The second figure is that of cutting off bad branches and engrafting others in their place, in the same root, which is Palestine again.

14. Thou madest us an example among heathen,
An object for shaking the head at among nations.
15. All day long is my confusion before me ;
And the shame of my countenance hath covered me :
16. On account of the voice of the reproacher and blasphemer,—
On account of the presence of the adversary and avenger.
17. All this hath come upon us : yet have we not forgotten thee ;
Nor have we behaved deceitfully against thy covenant.
18. Our heart hath not turned back,
Nor our steps declined from thy way ;
19. Though thou hast thrown us into a place of dragons,
And spread over us the shadow of death.

In verse 9 the Psalmist begins to show, that the present low condition of his nation was quite the reverse of what it had been, when the Lord showed them all the favours enumerated in the first part of the Psalm ; and that all their misery is the result of His having withdrawn His mighty assistance from them. From verse 9 to verse 14, the fatal battle on Gilboah's mountains, and its mournful events, are literally and expressively described ; verse 10, how Israel's army retreated before the Philistines, and how they became their prey (by reason of the statement in verse 9) ; verse 11, how Israel was destroyed by their enemies, and how they were obliged to leave their cities and take refuge among heathen nations. (See 1 Sam. xxxi. 7, also our preface to this Psalm). Verse 14, "An example among the heathen," i.e. an example of terror and woe, as the word מִשָּׁל (Mashal) is often used to signify ; so the shaking of the head at them, as an expression of their derision. From verse 14 to verse 19, David's plaintive voice is easily recognised. He and his men were at that time in the very midst of the reproaching and blaspheming heathen who triumphed over the ruin of his nation ; he therefore says in the latter verse, that the Lord has thrown them, or pushed them into the very midst of these dragon Philistines who destroyed their brethren the Israelites. But in verses 17 and 18, as in several succeeding ones, he shows, that though all this had come upon them, still they had not forsaken their God, nor despaired of His help in their speedy deliverance.

20. If we have forgotten the name of OUR God,
And stretched out our hands to a strange god :
21. Surely God can search it out ;
For He knoweth the secrets of the heart.
22. For, for thy sake we are killed all day long ;
We are counted as sheep for the slaughter.
23. Rise up ! why sleepest thou, O my God ?
Awake ! throw not away for ever.
24. Why dost thou hide thy countenance ?
Why forget our misery and our oppression ?
25. When our soul is bowed to the dust,
Our body cleaveth to the earth.

26. Arise for our help, and redeem us,
For the sake of thy tender mercies.

The bold confession made by David in verses 20 and 21—his calling Jehovah to be witness of their faith in Him, and the general plea contained from verse 17 to verse 22, refer only to their fidelity to the main foundation of their holy religion, which was to acknowledge Jehovah as their covenant God. The church of God, from her earliest existence down to this day, has been, and is, the object of deadly hatred to the powers of darkness, and to the principalities of this world, and has always had reason to exclaim in the language of the Psalmist in verse 22, "For thy sake," &c. This language is in so far justifiable, because, had the church not stood aloof from Satan's children—had she not confessed that God whom they hate, the world surely "would love them if they belonged to her." When, therefore, persecution breaks out, wherein the children of God suffer even the most cruel tortures and ignominious deaths, though the church, in such a case, must confess that Jehovah is righteous in all His ways, and that this visitation comes upon her because of her sin, of whatever character the sin may be—still, it would be hypocrisy were she to confess that she has been so visited, because she had rejected her God and served idols of wood and stone, when actually this was not the case. David, in the verses in question, makes no claim on God, nor does he mean to say that the nation deserved not at that time the fearful destruction that came upon them; but he states the fact, that after all the calamities that had recently befallen them because of their sins, they had not been driven to despair, nor been caused to give up their religion and join the Philistines, or any other idolatrous nations—although they might thus have freed themselves from all their miseries—but they preferred rather "to be counted as sheep for the slaughter," for Jehovah's sake. There have been times, indeed, when the Jewish church, after severe punishment and affliction, had to confess her apostacy from God in that she had broken His covenant—had forsaken Him entirely, and served Baal or other abominations of the heathen. Such confessions we find in the prayers of the saints who lived in those days, as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, &c.; but at the period in question, Israel amidst all their sins did not serve idols. Wicked as Saul was, he nevertheless destroyed even all those deluded beings from Israel, who pretended to be wizards or to have familiar spirits. 1 Sam. xxviii. 9. Although he might have done it to reconcile the nation for the slaughter of the priests, still this proves that there was no idolatry among Israel at that time, which no doubt was the result of the labours of the venerable prophet Samuel. See 1 Sam. vii. 2—6. Besides this, we must bear in mind, that though this Psalm refers chiefly to the whole nation, still we have in it several expressions in the singular number, which refer to David himself, as well as others, which must refer to those of Israel who were at that time in Philistia with him, who were very numerous, and consisted of the greatest and best men of the whole nation: See 1 Chron. xii. 1—22, especially the last of these verses. But even after David had stated that he and his men (and even if he meant the whole nation, he must have known their resolution in the matter) were resolved to wait for God—to trust in Him and in Him alone—and after he had called the Lord, who knows the hearts of men, to witness that this their resolution was upright and steadfast,—still he does not plead that God would deliver them because of *their* merits, but

FOR THE SAKE OF HIS TENDER MERCIES. Now surely, if Dr Tholuck would have understood this Psalm, he could not have found reason to cavil, nor have conceived so monstrous an absurdity as to conclude that the Psalmist had not a correct view or perception of sin. But we are sure if he had only half the knowledge of sin which the Psalmist had, he would have drawn a very different conclusion.

After the death of Saul, his sons, and his associates, all of whom were David's deadly enemies, David asked the Lord by the Oracle if he should venture again to enter Judea. The answer being in the affirmative, David asked again about the particular part of Judea, and the Lord answered that he should settle at Hebron. Hebron is that famous city where the Patriarch Abraham spent a great part of his life, and which seems to have been in general the favourite residence of the three Patriarchs. It was the second largest fortification in the land of Judea, including, with the castles on the mountains, several small cities in the surrounding district. It belonged once to the Canaanite Anakim, or giants, but was conquered by Caleb and his children, who destroyed the giants and possessed themselves of the fortification. This was naturally the place best fitted for David to settle in at that time. It lay in the centre of his native country and of his tribe, and was strong enough to withstand an attack of the enemy. David, moreover, could not fail to perceive that the destruction of Ziklag by the Amalekites would prove of great service to him in his present circumstances; it removed every ground of suspicion on the part of Achish the Philistian king. And what more natural for him than to sympathise with David's movements, seeing that Saul who sought his life was no more, and that the city Ziklag, which he had granted to David and his men, was reduced to ashes? The best and most natural way for him to act was to return to his native country. Accordingly, no sooner had David and his army settled in the cities of Hebron than the tribe of Judah came and put themselves under his protection, having anointed him king over them. David was thirty years old when he was made king in Hebron. Refined and purified in the furnace of affliction during seven years—all his sufferings under Saul having been sanctified by the Holy Spirit, who rested on him from the time that he was anointed king by the prophet Samuel—he was now fitted to enter upon the duties of his office, as king over the people of God. But Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle, and chief general of the army of Israel, appointed Ishbosheth, the fourth son of Saul, to reign over the other tribes of Israel. The Philistian king and his princes on the other hand remained inactive, and, as it appears, indifferent to these movements in Israel. Various reasons might be assigned for this: 1st, The destruction of the army of Israel, and the subjection of the nation, had been so complete, that they regarded their movements only with feelings of scorn and contempt, and concluded, that in their weak and helpless state, they would never think of attempting to break the Philistian yoke even with their kings. 2d, From the friendship subsisting between David and Achish, the latter allowed the matter to pass unnoticed; nor is it unlikely that both David and Ishbosheth had to pay a yearly tribute to the Philistines. 3d, The Philistines, on their part, were disposed rather to look upon the rival kings of the Jews with fiendish delight, more especially as war soon broke out among them; so that they had no need to

fight against a kingdom divided in itself, and whose subjects were fighting and devouring each other. But we proceed with the narrative. Though David had only one tribe at his command, while his antagonist had eleven, still all the struggles of the feeble Ishbosheth, and all the efforts of the experienced and mighty general Abner, were alike unavailing against David's formidable, though in number smaller army. Joab, David's general, always defeated Abner with his army, and put them to flight.*

Thus the Lord began to fulfil his promises—to establish the kingdom of Judah, and to extinguish gradually that of Benjamin, as the inspired historian tells us—"There was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker." 2 Sam. iii. 1.

This great change produced in David's circumstances, will naturally lead us to expect some Psalms in which David should express the lessons he was taught by the mysterious ways in which Jehovah had led him hitherto. He now saw the complete end and punishment of those wicked men, as well as the design of their violent deeds, of whom he complained so grievously in several of his Psalms (see Ps. xciv. chron. Ps. xx., and Ps. x. chron. Ps. xxi.) He now saw the faithfulness of God to those who trust in him, as well as the complete overthrow of the wicked, though they may flourish for a time. These lessons are fully described in three different Psalms, namely, the lxxiii., xlix., and xcii. The reason why we place them in this order is, because the sentiments they contain follow in this manner after each other. Psalm lxxiii. contains the first lesson. In it the Psalmist describes how in the dark period of Saul's cruelty, many difficulties arose in his mind from not being able to reconcile Jehovah's dispensations in his Providence; and how all these difficulties were now removed by seeing the end of those who had been the stumbling-block in his way. Though this Psalm appears under the name of Asaph, we are fully satisfied from its poetry and sentiment, that David was its author, and that Asaph, as one of his chief musicians, received it to exhibit in the Temple. Internal evidence, we trust, will put it beyond doubt. Psalm xlix., which was given to the division of the sons of Korah, contains the second lesson; and whilst the former is a description of personal experience, the latter is a didactic Psalm, intended as a lesson for the Church in general. Psalm xcii.

* In one of these lamentable engagements of Israel against Israel, Joab with all his fierceness proved very noble and humane. When he had put Abner's army to flight, his brother Asahel, who was "swift of his feet as a roe of the field," pursued hard after Abner, intending to kill him. Abner, turning towards Asahel said unto him, "Turn thee to thy right or to thy left . . . Wherefore should I smite thee to the ground, for how will I lift up my face to Joab thy brother?" (an evidence this of the noble disposition of the two generals, though they fought like tigers against each other in the service of their respective kings); but Asahel refused to withdraw, so that Abner was obliged to kill him in self defence. Joab, and Abishui his second brother, enraged by the death of Asahel, pursued Abner until the evening, when Abner addressed Joab from a hill where he had taken refuge, in the following words, "Shall the sword devour continually? Knowest thou not that this will turn out into a bitter end, (i.e. when we have devoured each other's strength, how will Israel stand against their heathen enemies)? How long shall it be, then, ere thou bid the people return from pursuing their brethren?" Joab's feelings were touched by this just appeal, and not looking for the death of his brother (having probably been informed that it was after warning and in self defence), said to Abner, "As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken thus, not until the morning would these the people have withdrawn from pursuing one another." So Joab blew the trumpet, and stopped his army, and led them back to Judea, where they buried Asahel in the sepulchre of his father in Bethlehem, (2 Sam. ii. 12-32.)

which bears the title of a "Solemn Song for the Sabbath-day," contains the same sentiments of the two former. But, in its style, it is arranged as a glorious song of adoration and praise to Jehovah, for the mysterious and wonderful dealings of his providence, and for his righteous judgments.*

PS. LXXIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XLI.

"A SONG FOR ASAPH."

1. Ah, how good is God to those Israelites that are of a pure heart !
2. But as for me, my feet were ready to slip ;
My steps were almost overthrown ;
3. When I was envious at the arrogant—
When I beheld the peace of the wicked.

The experience of the Psalmist had been, what the experience of every Christian will be, to a greater or a less extent. He had seen wickedness in high places ; he had witnessed the prosperity of men who shed like water the innocent blood of God's servants ; he waited for a time, but the long-suffering of God continued, and while their hands were filled with violence, their prosperity increased ; his heart was filled with a sense of indignation at the sight—he was grieved, wounded, confounded, and could not reconcile these things with the justice of Jehovah. But he is now cured of his mistake—he sees that he was wrong—and that the omniscient God is not only righteous in all his ways, but that the very prosperity of the wicked contributes to their ruin, and that his own happiness, both in time and in eternity, will thereby be increased. Such are the results which he anticipates, in the providence of God, even from the sufferings which he had endured. The Psalmist therefore begins this Psalm, in which he is to relate the lessons he had received, by stating, first of all, that Jehovah is good ; and that every child of God under his covenant will find him to be so, when he is of a pure heart ; that our doubts, griefs, and hesitations, have their origin in the depravity of our own heart ; that the more we learn of Jehovah's ways, the more clearly will we see that he is good ; that his government is good, and all the dispensations of his holy providence ; that even the sufferings we endure, although inflicted by the wickedness of men, are all intended for our good ; and when we cannot perceive this, the fault is our own, because our hearts are not pure. The Psalmist then proceeds to show that he was taught this important lesson by experience—that he was in danger of stumbling, yea, of falling into error, when he began to be envious at the ungodly, and could not bear to see the peace of the wicked. He describes still farther the peace of the wicked :

* The reader is requested to examine again Ps. xxxvii. chron. Ps. xxxv., which, as we showed in the preface and exposition, was written after the death of Nabal ; and let him carefully compare those predictions which refer to Saul and his associates, according to the exposition where it is illustrated. This will set in a still clearer light the meaning of these three Psalms, which treat more directly of the fulfilment of these predictions, and the lessons to be derived from them.

4. For there are no fetters for them,—
They are sound and firm like a tower.*
5. Of the afflictions of mortals, they do not partake ;
And in the common plagues of mankind they have no share.
6. Hence doth pride compass their neck—
Hence doth the robe of violence cover them.
7. Their eyes stare out from the midst of fat,†
The cavities of their heart are overgrown therewith.
8. They plunge deep, and hurry into wickedness ;‡
They utter violence against the Most High.
9. They have set their mouth against heaven,
And their tongue travelleth through the earth.
10. Therefore do His people startle at this point,
And waters in abundance are afforded unto them.

The scarcity of water in Palestine in the time of drought, caused the people to visit oftener those springs which had always a good supply. The want of an answer to a question causes the interrogator to return again and again to the same question. The former was applied metaphorically to the latter. If one had greatly offended his neighbour without reason, and the offended party often turned up the question, "Why hast thou offended me?"—if the offender, instead of giving a satisfactory answer, had said, "O, why dost thou turn up the question so often?" the offended party would answer (proverbially), "Because I find abundance of water," *i.e.* "I

* The word *חֲצִבּוּלִים* (*Chartzubolim*) occurs only in another place, Isa. lviii. 6, "Let loose the fetters of wickedness." Here it means that there is nothing to fetter the wicked in their violent career; no disaster, no disease, befalls them. The word *לִמְיָתָם* (*Lemotham*) must be divided and read *לָמָו* (*Lamo*), "unto them," or "for them;" and *תָּם* (*Tam*), which belongs to the second clause, and means "sound" or "perfect," *i.e.* in health.

† "Their eyes stare out from the midst of fat." The orbicular muscle which surrounds the eye is often swelled with fat, which accumulates beneath it in persons of a corpulent frame. Here the figure is employed to describe the vigorous and healthy appearance of the wicked in their prosperity; their eyes keenly stare forth from the midst of the fat that surrounds them. The word *מִשְׂכֵּיחַת* (*Maskiyot*) never means "wish" (nor "thoughts," as Hengstenberg renders it.) It signifies a place, a box, a basket, a frame, or cavity wherein something lies. Num. xxxiii. 52; Prov. xxv. 11, &c. Here it means, that the cavity where their heart lies is swelled and overgrown with fat—a figure denoting the hardness of their heart arising from pride. Comp. Ps. xvii. 10, chron. Ps. xxxiii; and Ps. cxix. 70, chron. Ps. xxxvi, and their exposition.

‡ The word *יַמִּיקוּ* (*Yamiku*) is derived from the root *עָמַק* (*Amok*), "deep," as it appears here as an active verb, present tense, third person plural, hence the *ע* is dropped, and instead of it a *י* is added after the *מ*. This *י* would never have been there, had the word been derived from *מָקַד* (*Mak*), "rotten" or "corrupt," as commentators imagine. See the following places where this latter word occurs, and from which it will be seen that *י* is never found after the *מ*. Lev. xxvi. 39; Ps. xxxviii. 5; Isa. xxxiv. 3, 4; Ezek. xxiv. 23, and xxxiii. 10; Zech. xiv. 12. In the first clause *יַמִּיקוּ* (*Vidabu*) means, "and they drive" or "hurry," but in the second clause it is *יְדַבְּרוּ* (*Yedaberu*), "they speak," or "they utter." The word *מִמָּרוֹם* (*Mimarom*, "against," or "of the Highest," *i.e.* He who dwells on high. So 2 Kings xix. 22, and many other places.

am thirsting for a satisfactory answer, and finding none, therefore I come again and again to the well (to the same subject), until I am satisfied."*

Thus, after having described the nature of the stumbling-block—the difficulty which he felt in understanding the dispensations of God, when he beheld the prosperity of the wicked and blaspheming and murderous men, the Psalmist says, in verse 10, "Therefore," *i.e.* seeing that such is the condition of the wicked—"therefore his people," *i.e.* the persecuted and suffering people of God, "startle at this point." **יָשִׁיב** (Yashiv) means here a constant startling backwards from surprise, as well as the frequency of their startling, at this point. Then he adds the reason, namely, because this subject "affords them waters in abundance," *i.e.* abundance of reason, for the question is not easily answered. The word **יָמָצוּ** (Yematzu) means "are found," or "afforded" unto them. It is derived from **מָצָא** (Matzo), "to find," though the **ס** is dropped, as it is Num. xi. 11, and in some other places. He then proceeds in describing what they say—with what words they fill their mouths as with water.

11. And they say, How can it be that God knoweth?—
How can there be knowledge with the Most High?
12. Behold, are not these wicked men? Yet continually prosperous—
Continually increasing in wealth!
13. Ah! was it not in vain that I purified my heart—
That I washed my hands in innocency!
14. Wherefore I was plagued all day long,
And my chastisement appeared every morning.

Here we have a very graphic description of the melancholy doubts, and perplexing thoughts, which often rise in the minds of God's children, and which return on every occasion which presents itself to the afflicted and persecuted child of God, of witnessing the affluence and prosperity of the wicked. David now begins to consider what to his mind appeared a contrast, between the teaching of God's word and the real state of matters in the world. It seemed, in his own suffering and afflicted mind, to involve a contradiction. This was an exercise peculiarly dangerous to the Israelite of old, to whom the promise of temporal rewards for his obedience had been specially made. When he beheld, notwithstanding of this, the prosperity of the ungodly, and contrasted it with his own sufferings and trials, he was tempted to call in question the omniscience and omnipresence of Jehovah; for, if they did exist, why was not punishment instantly inflicted upon the wicked, and why were the difficulties and trials which their condition occasioned to the people of God not removed out of the way? Now, we must bear in mind that the Psalmist stated in verse 2d, that he would describe his own experience—how that this mystery became a stumbling-block to *his* feet, and

* This metaphor, taken from the drinking of water, was also used when speaking of one who accused another wrongfully, as in Job xxxiv. 7, "What man is like Job, drinking evil, like water," *i.e.* filling his mouth with evil against God, as with water.

that *his own* steps were nearly overthrown, when he became envious at the wicked.

Having stated, from verse 4 to verse 9, the nature of the stumbling-block, which was the prosperity of the wicked, he then leaves out his own concern in the matter, and declares in verse 10 that the people of God in general startle at this point, and that this becomes a grievous question unto them. He then puts words in their mouth, and from verse 11 to verse 14, relates their doubts and objections. But, as the Psalmist must restore the order of the poem and return to his own experience, as he promised in verse 2, he does so in verse 15 (a verse misunderstood by all commentators), where he confesses, that not only those of whom he spoke in verse 10, startled at this point—that not only in their minds were doubts generated, as stated from verse 11 to verse 14, (as if he himself was quite free of them); but that he also belongs to the number of “the people of God” referred to in verse 10—that he also was overtaken by the same error—that he offended in this matter alike with all the children of God—that though he had not gone so far as they did, still it was a grievous matter to him also until he found it out.

15. Seeing I have resolved to announce it :

Behold I have also offended like the generation of thy children ;*

16. And whenever I studied to understand this matter ;

It was perplexing in mine eyes ;

17. Until I come into the sanctuary of God,

Then do I understand their end.

The term “sanctuary” is not to be understood here in its literal sense only, as if David meant that it was only when he literally went into the sanctuary, *i.e.* the place where the ark and cherubim stood, that this mystery was solved. After having stated in verse 15 that he is one of those who startled at this great and mysterious subject, and in verse 16 that, whenever he tried to understand it according to the outward appearance of things, he was always disappointed, and the subject appeared to him still more perplexing, he then declares in verse 17 that he found that the only way to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the difficulty, was to leave the outward appearance of the matter, and search deeper into the *ways* of Jehovah in his sanctuary—to cease from judging merely by the external aspect of things, and dig deep into the secrets of Jehovah’s plans and purposes—in short, to turn away from the trifling occurrences of vanishing

* It has been shown several times that the word אָמַר (Amar) often means “to resolve,” or “determine,” as Exod. ii. 14 ; 2 Sam. xxi. 16. David resolved at the outset of this Psalm to relate his own experience, but as he introduced the *people of God in general*, and their offence at this stumbling block, he now says, “Seeing I have resolved to announce it : Behold I have also offended along with, or like the generation of thy children,” *i.e.* like the people of God, of verses 10–14. The word הִנֵּה (Hineh), “Behold,” must be placed before the word כָּמֹנִי (Chemo), “like,” or “along with,” “Behold along with the generation of thy sons have I also offended,” that is to say, “Along with the rest I startled at this point, and could not find it out.”

time, and look beyond its confines into the vast and endless eternity.* Now there were two difficulties to be removed, *first*, that of the prosperity of the wicked in their violent career, and *second*, that of the sufferings and trials of the people of God, though they pursue daily after holiness, and try to keep themselves pure in heart, and wash their hands in innocence from every transgression and sin. The latter difficulty is removed as soon as the child of God directs his spiritual eye unto Jehovah's sanctuary, and Jehovah is pleased to open his eyes and to show him light in His light. There he discovers that he has to do with a righteous God, in whose eyes the heavens are not pure, and far less the sinful child of Adam—that a sin-offering has therefore been appointed, and typical blood of sprinkling provided to show unto man that he is, at the best, under the sentence of death, unless there be one to say—"Deliver from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom"—that the Antitype of this sin-offering was to be made perfect by sufferings, that he might procure eternal happiness for his suffering and sore-tried children—that the sufferings and afflictions of the people of God must therefore be intended for their good now, and for the welfare of their immortal souls. Thus the difficulty in the latter case is removed by a due consideration of the ways of God in his sanctuary, as these were revealed and exhibited by the sacred institutions of types and ceremonies. As for the other difficulty—"the prosperity of the wicked"—a full and satisfactory answer to it may be found in the following verses. As David's chief difficulty on this point had a reference to Saul and Doeg and other wicked men of a similar character, so their sudden destruction furnished, as regards the present time, a satisfactory solution; while the discovery which the light of Jehovah's sanctuary afforded to the child of God of the world to come, gives him a complete victory over his former doubts. It shows him that not only does he yet stand in the land of the living, while the wicked whom he envied were cut off like grass; but also that a happy eternity awaits him beyond this world of darkness and doubts, while those whom he envied because of their prosperity, have before them a boundless ocean of eternal misery and woe.

18. Truly thou hast placed them in slippery places,
Thou hast cast them into utter destruction.
19. O how suddenly were they brought to desolation!
They perished and were consumed with terror.†
20. As one contemneth a dream when he awaketh,

* The fact that the Psalmist puts מִקְדָּשִׁים (Mikdeshy), "Sanctuaries," in the plural, shows that it refers not only to the institutions of Jehovah in the sanctuary built with hands, but also to his ways in his Holy Sanctuary above—to the holy and, though mysterious, still omniscient dispensations of his providence; moreover, that it refers not only to his dealings with his children in time, but also to what he has prepared for them in eternity. Comp. Psalm lxxiii. 35, "holy places."

† This is wonderfully illustrated by 1 Sam. xxviii. 5, 20, where the terror that first laid hold on Saul—and, as we may suppose, on his wicked friends also—is described when he saw the Philistian army; in like manner, when he heard his doom pronounced by the prophet Samuel; and also (chap. xxxi. 3—7) when, from a feeling of terror and the misery he endured, he killed himself in despair.

So, O God, hast thou caused their image to be contemned in the city.*

Having thus described the sudden destruction which overtook Saul and his wicked associates, whose temporary prosperity had occasioned so much perplexity to his mind, the Psalmist proceeds to confess his former folly, his want of patience and insight into the righteous ways and dealings of God, as well as the beneficial lessons he had derived from it.

21. Though my heart was like in a ferment, and I was pierced in my reins :
22. When I was void of understanding,
And was before thee like one of the brutes :—
23. Still I continue to be with thee,
For thou didst lay hold of my right hand.
24. O that thou wouldst guide me still by thy counsel ;
And at last thou shalt receive me to glory.†

* The figure here is this : One may be terrified in a dream by something appearing to his imagination, but when he awakes and sees that it was but a dream, he contemns the terror. So Saul and his associates, who had been the terror of the cities wherever they came, are now remembered with contempt and scorn. He says their "image" or "shadow" was contemned, because, while in reality they were no more, yet their terrific image remained in remembrance. The word *תִּרְזַח* (Tirzeh), "Thou hast caused to be contemned," refers also to the "dream" of the first clause, which is the figure of the second, but without the particle *ו*.

† It is again our painful duty to expose the error and presumption of German impiety, Hengstenberg, who, as we have already seen in several places, appears determined to banish from the Psalms every reference to eternity, renders verse 24, "Thou guidest me by thy counsel, and bringest me to honour." In order to strengthen this translation he says—"Against the exposition which adopts the idea of eternal glory—'thou takest me finally to glory;' it may be urged that *אָחַר* (Achar) has not the sense of 'finally,' and that *כְּבוֹד* (Kavod) cannot simply denote the heavenly glory, of which there is not one single word throughout the whole Psalm." Now who will not laugh to scorn such a miserable idea, that because the whole Psalm is occupied with a description of a special character, therefore there cannot be the hope of glory expressed by the Psalmist in a single verse! The very nature of the Psalm is fitted to expose the fallacy of such presumption. David certainly could not speak of eternal glory where his weakness and doubts are described; but when he found out his error—when he saw that Jehovah is righteous in all his ways—when, in short, he had humbly confessed his former weakness, he then entreats the Lord, who had graciously supported him hitherto, to continue still to lead him by his counsel. Now, what can David here mean, but that the Lord would lead him by his counsel all the days of his life? "*אָחַר*" (Veachar), "and at last," or "and after this." (*i.e.*, after thou hast guided me by thy counsel all the days of my life) thou shalt take me to glory?" And if Hengstenberg did not know that *אָחַר* (Veachar) means "and at last," or even "and finally," he should have examined the collateral places in the Bible where the same expression is used, before making such a false statement. The following are some of them: Gen. xxx. 21, "and finally she bare a daughter," chap. xxxiii. 7, "and finally came Joseph," &c. In both places "finally" or lastly must be the meaning. In a similar sense we find the word *אַחֵרֵי* (Achrey) used in Gen. v. 4, 7, 10, 13. "After that," *i.e.*, after the event spoken of in the context. Chap. ix. 28, *אַחֵר* (Achar) "after" the flood. Exod. v. 1, *אַחֵרֵי* (Veachar), "and afterwards." Lev. xiv. 8, *אַחֵרֵי* (Veachar), "and afterwards." See also verses 19, 36, &c. Now, it would have been much more to his purpose, and more honest on his part, if Hengstenberg had at once said that he gives no credit to David or to Asaph (whom he reckons to have been the author of this Psalm) for any knowledge of eternity at all, than to torture and misrepresent the meaning of the most glorious passages, by giving false interpretations of words which he does not understand. Of the meaning of the word

Such are the weakness and ignorance even of the children of God, and such the boundless mercy of Jehovah toward them; such also are the results of all our doubts, and difficulties, and trials in the season of obscurity and unbelief. We will always have occasion to humble ourselves in dust and ashes before a merciful and gracious God—not only because we shall find out the equity and righteousness of Jehovah, in the very things regarding which we have been most grieved when in our ignorance we could not perceive them; but also because we must remember the mercy and the long-suffering he has exercised towards us, in the very time of our brutish ignorance and faithlessness; and even at the very time when he had reason enough to cast us off because of our ignorance and presumption, he graciously laid hold on our right hand and led us as a father would his erring child, and preserved us from falling, from straying, and from destruction. Such was David's experience after the Lord had vouchsafed to him a glimpse into his ways in his sanctuary. He was humbled—he confessed that he had erred—he saw the terrible end of his enemies—he was ashamed of his former doubts—he had experienced Jehovah's faithfulness towards him even in the days of his weakness—he therefore confesses his guilt, and for the future he implores Jehovah's guidance in time and in eternity, knowing that if Jehovah should guide him as he had done hitherto in time, he would then receive him into everlasting glory.

25. Whom else have I in the heavens?
And besides thee I put my delight in none on earth.
26. Even when my flesh and my heart shall waste away:
God shall be the Rock of my heart,
And my portion throughout eternity.
27. For, behold how those perish, that are far from thee!
How thou didst destroy those who strayed from thee!
28. But for me is best to draw near to God:
In Jehovah my Lord, have I fixed my refuge,
That I may proclaim all thy marvellous works.

Here we have the glorious sum of David's lessons, and his fixed resolution to offer himself as a living sacrifice to God in life and in death, in time and for eternity. Like afflicted Job, who said, "Even if he kill me I will trust in him," so David maintains (in verse 26) that although his earthly frame must fade away through death, Jehovah shall remain his everlasting delight and portion. "The Rock of my heart," means the foundation and

כבוד (Kuvod), "Glory," of which he also affirms that "it cannot simply denote the heavenly glory, of which there is not a word throughout the whole Psalm," he is equally ignorant. Let him examine Isa. xi. 10, and many other passages where this word appears, and he will find that in no other sense can it be with propriety understood but of the glory of heaven—Jehovah's glory—eternal glory. The expression "bringest me to," which Hengstenberg wishes to force into the passage, is entirely foreign to the expressions of the original נָתַתְּ (Ne'atth) and תִּכְחֶנִּי (Tikacheni). Thus he endeavours to substitute a false meaning for the real one, to bereave the Oracle of its splendour, and impose meanings upon it which it neither doth nor can contain.

substance of his eternal delight—of the chiefest desire of his heart—of everlasting joy in glory.

Whilst in the preceding Psalm David related the manner in which he was taught such an important lesson, in the next he teaches that lesson to the world at large.

PS. XLIX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XLII.

(Lamnatzeach) "To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A Song to be performed by the children of Korah.

1. O hear ye this, all ye nations ;
Incline your ears, all ye inhabitants of the world :
2. Both the sons of the low as the sons of the mighty,—
Both rich and poor together.
3. My mouth shall utter maxims of Wisdom,
And the sentiments of my heart, full of understanding.
4. I will incline mine ear to take an example,
When I open my riddle upon the harp.

The solemn introduction to the following Poem indicates, without doubt, that something rich, important, and instructive, will follow. The invitation contained in the first two verses is universal, without respect to nation, family, caste, or rank. This shows that the Psalmist intended to present the important instructions of this Psalm to the world at large ; consequently he must have had his spiritual eye directed to distant futurity, when all nations and tongues and families of the earth should set a high value upon his inspired Oracle, and resort to it for instruction. In the 3d verse he assures us that the words he was about to utter, contain maxims of wisdom and sayings of great understanding. But in the 4th verse he tells us, that while he is to open his "riddle" upon the harp, he shall endeavour to benefit by it also, and improve the lesson he was going to teach others. By the expression חִידָתִי (Chidathi) "my riddle," we are not to understand that the Psalmist means to give us a dark speech, or propound to us unsolved mysteries ; but that he is to speak to us about the wise and instructive lessons which he received in the "Holy Places," or "Sanctuaries" of God,* regarding matters which had been riddles and mysteries† to him, but are now clearer and brighter, though even still comprehensive, deep, and difficult.

5. Wherefore was I afraid in the days of distress ?
Because the sin of my self-deception hath encompassed me.

In this single verse is contained the entire substance of the foregoing Psalm, and the lesson which the Psalmist was taught, as related there.

* See the foregoing Psalm, ver. 17, and exposition.

† See the foregoing Psalm, ver. 16.

There he confesses that he had grievously offended against the goodness and faithfulness of God, in that he called in question, though indirectly, the rectitude of the divine government—in that he entertained doubts about the equity of divine providence, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked, and the afflicted and down-trodden condition of the children of God. In such circumstances his heart was oppressed with terror, and his mind filled with melancholy misgivings, when he beheld the rage of his persecutors, and their apparently irresistible power. But Jehovah had now opened the gates of his sanctuary unto him, and caused the light that shines there to irradiate his soul; he now shewed him the fearful end of those who triumphed for a time; he drew aside the veil, and vouchsafed to him a glimpse into the eternal world, and taught him that all the sufferings of time are not worth complaining of, by the heir of eternal life and its glorious spiritual enjoyments; in short, that all the sufferings of God's saints are intended for their benefit, both in time and in eternity. David therefore opens this instructive Psalm, by laying the basis of it in this one verse. "Wherefore was I afraid in the days of adversity or distress? Where lay the reason of my fear? Was it in God and in the dispensations of his providence? No. But because the sin of my self-deception hath encompassed me. It was my own fault, my own weakness, my own error, my sin, my folly, my faithlessness, else I had had nothing to fear." The verb עָקַב (Akov) means "to cheat," "to deceive," "to supplant," "to defraud." Gen. xxvii. 36; Jer. ix. 3, xvii. 9. So in this verse עָקַבִּי (Akevai) means "my own deceit," as if the Psalmist meant to say, "I deceived myself, having had a false view of Jehovah's providence, and the method of his government, and therefore I feared where there was no cause to fear; for I was perfectly safe under the guardian care of the Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent God." But seeing the Psalmist had now been taught better things, and had seen reason to change his mind, therefore, after he has laid the basis of the Poem, by announcing that he was to speak from experience and not of mere suggestion, he begins to utter his instructions and wisdom. Before, however, entering upon the consideration of the wonderful sentences of this deep and comprehensive Oracle, we must bear in mind that David invited all the inhabitants of the world, high and low, rich and poor. They are now supposed to have come together, and the Psalmist, represented as standing in the midst of them, begins his address to the wicked and the haughty, the rich and the mighty, among his audience.

6. Those who trust in their wealth,
And boast themselves in the multitude of their riches ;
7. No man can by any means redeem his brother,
He cannot give unto God a ransom for him :
8. For the redemption-price of their soul is so exceeding great,
That it never will be accomplished ;
9. And for all that he liveth for ever,
And will never see dissolution.

The meaning of this part of the Oracle is surpassingly sublime. The Jews of old were possessed of a superstitious notion (and, alas ! it exists

among them to this day), that surviving friends could help the soul of a suddenly departed and wicked relative, by giving of his substance to the poor—by offering sacrifices for his soul (this of course cannot be practised now)—by paying godly men to offer prayers for his soul; and this, as well as similar delusions, are practised among the Jews to this day, as well as among the Roman Catholics. Thus wicked and ungodly men went on fearlessly and carelessly, gathering riches by every means of violence, in the expectation that, should they be cut off by a sudden death, their friends, who inherited their wealth, would not neglect to render them the last service, by appropriating a part of it for the redemption of their departed souls. To strip these wicked and ungodly men of their false cloak, David tells them that they are mistaken—that a surviving brother can by no means redeem the soul of his departed relative—that the ransom of souls is dearer and higher far than can be accomplished by any price in this world; and after all, he tells them in verse 9 that their souls are immortal—that they will remain alive through the endless ages of eternity. Terrible thought! A guilty, wretched, unclean, and unredeemed soul, living in eternal misery and woe! Never to be redeemed—never to be saved—never to see light in the horrible pit of eternal gloom; and what is worse, never to die—never to cease to exist—never to be dissolved; and, hence, never to be loosened from her heavy chains—never to be relieved from her dismal and heavy burden, groaning and fainting under it for ever in utter darkness and inexpressible agony in that place, where, as the Son of David afterwards expressed it, there is “wailing and gnashing of teeth.” Having thus exposed one delusion, the Psalmist proceeds to expose another error of those rich men who seek to perpetuate their names in the grandeur of tombs and monuments.

10. When they see* that the wise men die,
And perish along with the foolish and stupid,
And leave their wealth unto strangers :
11. Then they make their tombs† their houses for many ages—
Their formidable dwelling-places for many generations,
To be called by their names, even over the heaps of earth.‡
12. Whilst the common man, who, without splendour, must pass
his night,§
Is counted like the beasts that are cut off unheeded.

* Though it is here in the singular tense כִּי יִרְאֶה (Ki Yireh) “when he sees,” still as it refers to the “rich men” of verse 6, we put it in the proper plural in English, though it matters not in Hebrew.

† “Whose tombs.” Here we must read קִבְרוֹם (Kivrom) for קִרְבוֹם (Kirbom), which can have no sense in this verse. Hengstenberg, who appears not to have understood this Psalm, says here: “The LXX., whom the Vulgate follows, have in their negligence interchanged קִבְרוֹם with קִרְבוֹם.” We are sure, that if he had only understood the meaning of this passage, he would have gladly committed the same error.

‡ Over the heaps of earth,” i.e. their graves. So אֲדָמוֹת (Adamoth) means, “the heaps of earth” upon the grave. “Over,” i.e. upon the monuments over the grave.

§ יָקָר (Yekar) means “splendour.” לַיְלָה “to put up over night,” “to lie over night.” But here it refers to the poor man who enters on his long and dark night silently, without splendour, and buried in a common grave.

13. This their manner affordeth confidence unto them,
And about their latter end they flatter themselves with their
mouths, Selah, continually.*

In the first part of the Oracle, a very grievous delusion is mentioned, into which wicked rich men fall, namely, that of leaving the redemption of their souls to be performed by their friends after their death. Here we have a delusion of another kind, as vain and foolish as the former. It is this, that when wicked rich men see that death is common to all men—that wise and foolish, rich and poor, are captured alike by that irresistible enemy, despairing of, or even denying the existence of any future state of good or evil, in order that they may still stand above the common people, they build for themselves great and splendid mausoleums, with tombs and monuments, on which they have their names inscribed, and titles of earthly rank, and grandeur. Thus they constitute to themselves a false immortality; thus they think to perpetuate their wicked names in the monuments over the heaps of their graves; thus they endeavour to stand higher than the common people after death; thus they resolve to outrival the poor in the matter of their burial, who without noise, without splendour, are carried to their silent graves. When these “castles of folly” are prepared, they look upon them as their God, their hope, their confidence, and their pride, and flatter themselves continually with their mouths about their latter end. But David tells them what *their* latter end will soon be, and what *his* confidence after death is.

14. Like sheep they shall be driven to hell;
Death shall feed upon them :
And the righteous shall have dominion over them in the morning :
And their tortures shall continue,
Until hell be consumed from affording them a habitation.†
15. But God shall redeem my soul from the power of hell,
When he shall take me,‡ Selah, for ever.

* “This their manner,” *i.e.* of trying to perpetuate their memory in the monuments of their tombs. But זֶה דַּרְכָם (Zeh Darkom) may also be rendered, “In this manner,” for the plural in דַּרְכָם (Darkom) refers to the deluded rich man, and not to the manners. כֶּסֶל לָמוֹ (Kessel Lamo), “there is confidence unto them.” (See Job iv. 6, viii. 14, xxxi. 24; Psalm lxxviii. 7; Prov. iii. 26.) וְאֶחְיֶיהֶם (Veachrehem), “and their latter end.” (See Job viii. 7, xlii. 12; Gen. xlix. 1; Isa. ii. 2; Mic. iv. 1, &c.) But here it refers to the latter end after death. בִּפְהֵיהֶם יִרְצֻ (Bepihem Yirtzu), “they express their delight,” or flatter themselves with their mouths, *i.e.* about the false notion they entertain of immortality in their monuments.

† “Like sheep,” *i.e.* helpless, not being able to resist. שָׁטוּ (Shatu) means, “to be put forth” by force. וְצִירוֹם (Vetzirom), “and their tortures,” or “their agonies.” It is taken from צִירוֹם (Tzirim). (See 1 Sam. iv. 19; Isa. xiii. 8, xxi. 3; Dan. x. 16.) The two words וְצִירוֹם לְבָלוֹת (Vetzirom Levaloth), connected by the ל (“to or until”), signify that their agonies shall continue, until hell (Shaol) be consumed. מִצְּבֹל לֹ (Mizvul Lo), “from his habitation,” or from constituting a habitation any more, *i.e.* for them who are its inhabitants.

‡ “When he shall take me,” *i.e.* to himself, translate me to heaven, and not allow me to go

Here is the solution of the entire riddle in both of its parts. Did the wicked man flatter himself that his soul could be ransomed even after his death? He is told that there exists no such possibility; and in verse 9, that his unredeemed guilty soul is immortal. Did the wicked man deny the doctrine of immortality and the eternal world, and wish to perpetuate his name in a heap of stones? He is also shaken out of this wretched dream; and, in verse 14, both parties are told what their doom shall be. "Like sheep," dumb and helpless, terrified and confounded, they shall be driven to hell, and become the prey of eternal death, and the partners of the king of terrors and his angels in the place of everlasting woe. When it is said in the next clause of the verse, "that the righteous shall have dominion over them in the morning," we are to understand the language figuratively. It is often explained by our Lord and Saviour, who brought "life and immortality to light," and by his apostles, who told us in what position the righteous shall stand in the "morning of the resurrection," which shall abolish the long night of death. Now, the wicked have dominion over the poor sheep of Jehovah's pasture, but then, "the Ancient of Days shall come, and the judgment shall be given to the saints of the Most High; and the time shall come that the saints shall possess the kingdom." Dan. vii. 22. At the same time the Psalmist tells those who depart from this world with immortal but unredeemed souls, that their agonies and tortures shall continue as long as hell shall continue to afford them habitation, *i.e.* for ever and ever. While of the wise children of God it is said, that they "shall rise to everlasting life, and shine as the brightness of the firmament;" of the wicked it is said, they shall live "for shame and everlasting contempt." Dan. xii. 2, 3. "And they (the righteous) shall go forth and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, nor shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all men." Isa. lxvi. 24. David then shows the foundation of his hope and glory. He waits not for his friends to redeem his soul after death, nor does he glory in strong castles over his grave; but his Redeemer is God alone. He shall purchase his soul, by paying the ransom for it; and shall deliver it from the power of hell by taking it to himself to be with him for ever and ever. David then, like a good gospel preacher, makes an application of what had been said, in the rest of the Psalm.

16. Be thou not afraid, therefore, when a man becometh rich—
When the grandeur of his house shall be increased :
17. For when he dieth, he shall carry nought away—
His grandeur shall not descend after him.

to hell, for I am his property; he has redeemed me—paid the ransom for me. Hengstenberg, who has perverted the meaning of the whole Psalm, when he comes to this verse, tries, according to his usual practice, to banish from it all reference to eternity. The redemption of the soul from Shael he refers to some temporal deliverance from danger, and then he makes the second clause refer to the same act—not that the Lord would take him away, but that he would withdraw him from danger—"for," says Hengstenberg, "לָקַח (Lakach) neither means to receive," &c. But had Hengstenberg read Gen. v. 24, "And he (Enoch) was not, for God *לָקַח* received him," *i.e.* took him, or translated him (see Heb. xi. 5), he would not perhaps have fallen into such a glaring mistake. But there is no saying what one will do, when he is determined; for his whole exposition of this verse is perfect confusion. He could not have known himself what he meant to say.

18. For he blessed his soul while he lived,
But he shall praise thee, that thou hast provided better things
for thyself.*
19. He shall come to the generation of his fathers,
Who throughout eternity shall see no light.
20. The man who doth not understand the real splendour,
Is counted like the beasts that are cut off unheeded.

In these verses we have the application of the several doctrines scattered throughout the Psalm. In ver. 5 David laid the basis of the instruction he was about to communicate to the world, by declaring that his fear of the prosperity and violence of the wicked was without foundation—that it arose from his weakness and want of a clear insight into the righteous and omniscient dispensations of Jehovah's providence. But after having told, throughout the Psalm, the bitter end of the wicked and their reward in another world, he deduces the practical result of all this in verse 16. "Be thou not afraid, therefore, when a man becometh rich," *i.e.*, be thou not in the same error I was in before I was taught better things; but seeing I have told thee the real condition of those that forget God, both in time and in eternity, therefore fear thou not when thou seest them prosper for a while, for this very prosperity will contribute to their utter destruction by the pride and deceitful flattery to which these naughty riches will lead them; and then thou must take into consideration that when they die they shall carry with them nothing of those treasures which they have gathered by violence and robbery, and their grandeur shall not descend into the tomb with them, be it ever so great. In ver. 18 the application passes from time into eternity, and views the condition both of the wicked who were rich and the just who were poor in this world. Whereas in this life the former exalt themselves above those that are poor, and scorn the needy and afflicted in their sufferings; whereas, in their folly, they imagine that whilst the poor shall die without a name, and be interred without honour, and sleep without splendour, they who are great among men shall die in honour and in glory, and be interred in splendid tombs, and have their names perpetuated on their monuments—the Psalmist says in verse 18 that the wicked shall experience their folly and delusion beyond the grave. "For he (the wicked rich man) blessed his soul while he lived," *i.e.*, he enjoyed his soul's desires in this world—he had all his depraved heart could wish—he indulged in all the enjoyments and satisfied all the desires of the flesh,—thus he received his portion in time. But then David proceeds to show, that when the wicked man shall look about him in eternity, and remember how all his enjoyments have passed away like a dream, and that now naked, miserable, and wretched, nothing remains to him but an endless eternity of suffering and woe; and when at the same time he beholds the man who, for his

* "For he blessed his soul," is a figure for "he received all the good his soul could wish while he lived." He indulged in all the gratifications of his soul in this world. Compare the address of the rich man to his soul, Luke xii. 19. But in eternity "he shall praise thee" (confess, or acknowledge to thee) that thou hast acted more wisely than he—but whilst thou hast rejected the fading riches of time, in the service of God, thou hast "provided better things for thyself," *i.e.* unfading and glorious treasures in the skies—riches that last for ever.

faith, denied himself the luxuries of time, and endured afflictions and privations, but who has gathered treasures for himself and deposited them in an incorruptible and eternal treasury, which shall yield him inexpressible enjoyments in an endless world of realities; then "he shall praise him," *i.e.* his conduct in the time of his probation, and confess that he has "provided better things for himself," *i.e.* better things than the evanescent pleasures of time—the paltry gain of deceitful enjoyments—the withering flowers of spring that yield no fruit; yea, better things than a name engraved on a monumental tablet at the entrance of the grave, and that his name is now written in the book of life, and his lot among the eternally happy and rejoicing children of God. As an illustration and commentary upon this passage, we have the words of our Lord put into the mouth of Abraham, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." See the whole passage, Luke xvi. 19—31. In verse 19, David declares the end of the soul of the wicked, described in the foregoing verse, as having enjoyed all her portion in time: "She shall come to the generation of his fathers." The word **אבותיו** (*Avothav*) "his fathers," does not mean here "his progenitors," but rather means "his teachers," who led him astray, "his fathers" in wicked and infidel practices, "his predecessors" in corruption and delusion. That the word is sometimes used to signify "a teacher," "a master," "a counsellor," see Gen. xlv. 8; Judg. xvii. 10; 2 Kings ii. 12, v. 13, vi. 21, xiii. 14. The meaning in this verse is, that his soul shall enter the same place of misery and agony where his wicked and rebellious teachers are now placed, and that along with them he shall share in like torments in the place of utter darkness, where throughout eternity they shall see no light. David now concludes the Psalm by drawing a contrast in the last verse to what he had stated in verse 12. There he declared that the arrogant rich man, who builds for himself a splendid tomb, in which he thinks to perpetuate his name, laughs at the poor who must pass their night in silence and "without splendour," and regards them "like the beasts that perish heedlessly." But here in verse 20, he shows that the poor who valued not these vain shadows, but despised false splendour, should not be so accounted of, but that rather "the man who has no conception of real splendour should be counted like the beasts that perish heedlessly." For what he counted "splendour" is a mere mockery and delusion, and brings with it everlasting destruction and torment; but what the poor faithful man accounts "splendour" is something glorious and eternal—is not of this world, and perishes not along with the body, but endures for ever in the regions of bliss.

The confession made by David in Psalm lxxiii., and the important doctrines announced to the world in the foregoing Psalm, are converted in Psalm xcii. into a glorious song of adoration and praise. It was given out by the Psalmist to be rehearsed in the temple or tabernacle on the Sabbath days, when the people were assembled that they might have the doctrines contained in it impressed upon their hearts, and be admonished not to turn their minds to vanity. The xciii. forms an appendix, as it were, to the xcii.: it is short, but lofty and glorious.

PS. XCII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XLIII.

A VOCAL SONG OF PRAISE FOR THE SABBATH DAY.

1. It is a good thing to give thanks unto Jehovah,
And to sing praises unto thy name, O thou Most High :
2. To declare in the morning thy loving kindness,
And thy faithfulness in the night seasons ;
3. On the ten-stringed instrument, and upon the lyre,—
With the loud melody of the harp.
4. For thou hast made me rejoice in thy operations, O Jehovah :
Because of the works of thy hands I will shout for joy.
5. How magnificent are thy works, O Jehovah—
How exceeding deep are thy thoughts !
6. A stupid man doth not know it,
And a fool doth not comprehend this thing :
7. That when the wicked flourish like the herb,
And all the workers of iniquity spring up suddenly :
It is that they may be extirpated for ever in eternity.
8. But thou, O Most High, art Jehovah for ever more.
9. For, behold, thine enemies, O Jehovah !
For behold, thine enemies must perish ;
All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.
10. But thou hast exalted mine horn like that of an unicorn ;
I was anointed with fragrant oil :
11. Mine eye also gazed upon those who were lurking for me ;
When malefactors raised plots against me, mine ears did hear.

The 9th, 10th, and 11th verses contain the full scope of the whole Psalm. As we have seen that the two foregoing Psalms were produced by David when he saw the lamentable end and fearful destruction of Saul and his wicked friends and counsellors, so we see that the present song of praise is based upon the same occurrence. Though, as a general instruction for the Church, it assumes a wide aspect, still the references to a recent manifestation of a Divine judgment executed upon the enemies of God cannot be overlooked. Especially in the three verses referred to, we see clearly a contrast drawn between those enemies of David, who for a short time before flourished, and were terrible to the lovers of justice and peace, but were now cut off and removed, and himself, who shortly before was persecuted and exiled, and his life endangered by these very enemies, but who is now a flourishing king in Judea. In verse 9, the reason of the preceding praise and adoration is given, and a declaration made by what wonderful and recent dealings of a righteous Jehovah His mysterious ways were so admirably displayed ; “ For, behold, thine enemies, O Jehovah ! ” *i.e.* where are they now ?—where the disturbers of Israel’s peace ?—where the murderers of Nob’s innocent priests and their harmless families ? where those who threatened me with destruction and made of me an exile in Philistia ? “ For, behold, thine enemies must perish,” *i.e.* like those who are overwhelmed by a sudden destruction, so

all thine enemies must perish sooner or later; "All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered." In verse 10, David turns to himself as the recent object of the deadly hatred and persecution of those wicked but now destroyed enemies; "But thou hast exalted mine horn like that of an unicorn," *i.e.* thou hast lifted me up to power, glory, and honour (of which the horn was an emblem). "I was anointed with fragrant oil, בַּלָּל (Balal)

signifies the act of anointing or pouring the oil either upon the head of a person, or in a vessel, or on the altar, (see Lev. ii. 4, 5, where, "poured over with oil" should be read instead of "mingled," for it is the same as in verses 6 and 15 of this chapter: so Num. vii. 13, 19, 26, &c.) The word רֵעֵן (Raanon) has different meanings, though they come all from one source. Its primary meaning is "flourishing vigour," denoting that fresh, sappy, and green appearance of the olive tree when it is in its flourishing state. Hence זֵית־רֵעֵן (Zayith Raanon) a "flourishing olive tree," Ps.

lii. chronologically xix. verse 8. From the tree it is applied to its oil; but here the meaning of the word is "pleasant"—the pleasant oil of a goodly and flourishing olive tree. But the oil with which David was anointed by Samuel the prophet, was of the oil of Jehovah's sanctuary, which was prepared for the purpose of consecration, and had a pleasant and strong flavour from the different spices which were mixed with it (see Exod. xxx. 22—25; 31—33.) Thus it means in our passage, "fragrant oils," while in verse 14, where the figure is taken from the olive tree and applied to the spiritually prosperous saints, it signifies "flourishing." In verse 11, reference is again made by David to the sudden destruction of his enemies, "Mine eye also gazed upon those who were lurking for me," *i.e.* when he with overwhelming astonishment heard of the judgment that overtook them. But the expression is figurative, not meaning that he actually looked upon their dead bodies, but the astonishment with which he was filled when he heard of their end. (About the word בִּשְׁחָרַי [Beshurai] compare Ps. lix. chronologically Ps. xi. 10, also Ps. liv. chronologically Ps. xxix. 5.)

David now proceeds to describe the spiritual prosperity of the righteous, whom he compares to flourishing trees planted, as it were, in Jehovah's sanctuary, inasmuch as the saints derived their comfort and consolation and joy therefrom, and because it constituted the principle of their spiritual life.

12. The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree;
Like a cedar in Lebanon he shall spread abroad.
13. They shall be planted in the house of Jehovah;
They shall flourish in the courts of our God.
14. Even in old age they shall be vigorous;
They shall be full of sap and still flourishing:—
15. That they may declare that Jehovah my Rock is upright,
And that there is no unrighteousness with him.

PS. XCIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XLIV.

1. Jehovah reigneth ; He arrayed himself in majesty ;
Jehovah arrayed himself, and hath girded himself with strength
The world therefore is firmly established not to be moved,
2. Thy throne is firmly established from of old ; from eternity thou art.

After having celebrated in the foregoing Psalm the judgments of God which suddenly overtook the ungodly disturbers of peace and the violators of justice, the Psalmist now declares that Jehovah reigneth—that he arrayed himself in majesty, and girded himself with Omnipotent power—that he overthrew the wicked rebels in a moment, and restored to peace and quietness the convulsed land and its inhabitants. He therefore says in the last clause of the first verse, that, seeing this is the case, the world has nothing to fear, for He is unchangeable, and has established her to stand firm (*i.e.* established her in justice to stand by the same), and that every unjust plant that springs up must be rooted out sooner or later. In verse 2 the Psalmist shows that Jehovah's kingdom is not a newly-established one, but that His throne was firmly established, מֵעוֹלָם (*Meos*), which means from an indefinite time back in eternity, and that His existence is likewise from eternity ; and therefore that He, as well as His dominion and the rectitude of His government, is unchangeable, and will remain so for ever.*

* Hengstenberg on this Psalm labours here under a fanciful dream, which he tries with all his energy to work out into a reality. Not knowing the connection of the foregoing Psalm with David's history and with the other Psalms to which it properly belongs, nor seeing (as is evident) that the language and poetical style are David's, he endeavours to plunge both Psalms into the *Assyrian catastrophe*. This he wishes to prove from "the might of the world against the kingdom of God" indicated in Psalm xciii.; but we leave the reader to judge whether there be any such particular indication in the Psalm. The world indeed is always enmity against God, but what this Psalm has specially to do with a "mighty power of an Assyrian catastrophe," we are unable to tell. He farther observes, "and that we cannot descend later than this era (the Assyrian catastrophe) is evident from the very apparent dependence of the Psalm upon Ps. xlv." This is another strange assertion, for surely there is not a single phrase, nor idea, nor even the shadow of a likeness between the two Psalms farther than that they are both styled *Psalms*. On the expression "Jehovah reigneth," Dr H. drops the following extraordinary remark, viz.: "This alludes to the form used at the proclamation of the commencement of the reign of earthly sovereigns; comp. 2 Sam. xv. 10; 1 Kings i. 11, 13; 2 Kings ix. 13. This allusion makes it plain that the language (Jehovah reigneth) doth not apply to the constant government of God, but to a new glorious manifestation of his dominion, as it were a new ascent of the throne." Now this absurd idea is at once overthrown by the second verse, which establishes Jehovah on his throne *from eternity*, not as newly ascended. But if we examine the "allusion" to his quoted passages which he dreams to have found out, we shall see it to be his *delusion* rather than any *allusion* in our Psalm. How absurd would it be were one to assert, that because we will say in English, "Victoria reigns," or "Joseph reigns," or "Frederick reigns," therefore when we say in the same language "Jehovah reigneth," the latter must be an *allusion* to the earthly government of these monarchs who recently ascended their thrones, and cannot refer to Jehovah's constant dominion as an everlasting king? As is usually the case when a man tries to build a castle on a sandy foundation, that the higher he raises it the deeper it sinks, and the sooner it must fall; so the farther Dr H. forces the absurdity, the more absurd does it appear, for all the passages he quotes to establish his error speak decidedly against him, and refer to God's everlasting reign. The passages he cites, "and especially Rev. xi. 17, xix. 6," are decidedly opposed to his idea, for the first of these says, "and hast reigned," and the second, "for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth;" and both doubtless refer to his everlasting reign, and not to

3. The rivers have lifted themselves up, O Jehovah,
The rivers have lifted up their voices ;
But let the rivers lift up their surging waves :—
4. Jehovah, who is on high, is mightier
Than the roaring of many waters—
Than the mighty breakers of the sea.

The wicked men of the world, who lift themselves up in violence and pride above justice and equity, and disturb the peace of the righteous, are often compared in Scripture to overflowing streams, which sweep everything before them when swollen, and rushing furiously over their banks. But the Psalmist having experienced that God is stronger than they, and that in a moment's judgment He snatched them down in the midst of their fury and power, therefore when, in the first two clauses of verse 3d, the past was celebrated, that the rivers had once lifted up themselves and their voices (but were put to silence, as represented in the former Psalm), he says in the third clause, *ישאו נהרות דכים* (*Yisu Neharoth Dochyam*), "Let the rivers lift up their surging waves," i.e. let them do what they please, we shall not fear them, nor be dismayed by their fury, for "Jehovah, who is on high, is mightier than the roaring of many waters—than the mighty breakers of the sea,"—He will manage them in the midst of their fury—He will crush them in the very height of their strength. (Owing to the high poetical style of the 4th verse in the Hebrew text, we were obliged to make its last clause the first, as in the common version.)

5. Thy testimonies are exceedingly faithful :
Holiness shall be the beauty of thy house, O Jehovah,
Even to the remotest ages.

a new ascent to his throne, though they may refer to new manifestations of his power in executing judgment upon the rebels. But strangely and inexplicably he endeavours to show that the Hebrew word *הִיחָזֹר* (*Hithazor*) does not mean "He is girded," but "He girds himself." Now, what shall any one who is in the least degree acquainted with the conjugation of Hebrew words say to this? Shall we suppose that Dr H. does not know that *hithazor* means, "He hath girded himself?" Could he not find similar words in *hithpaal* like to *hithazor*? Surely if *Hithnabey* means, "He hath prophesied" (1 Sam. x. 10, 13, &c.); *hithnaseth*, "he hath uplifted himself," or "he was lifted;" *hithmaker*, "he estranged himself;" *hithnadov*, "he made a free gift, or offering;" *hithabul*, "he loaded himself;"—then *hithazor* cannot mean "he is girded," and far less "he girds himself," but must mean "he hath girded himself," or "he girded himself." Or if Dr H. wished to turn the *hithpaal* into an imperative verb, then the absurdity is greater, for who is it that said, or commanded God, "Gird thou thyself?" In the same manner he tries to pervert the word *נָחֹן* (*Nachon*), which, he says, means "he establishes; but it needs not much scholarship to see how false it is. The word never had, and never will have such a meaning. *Nachon* means "established," i.e., "Established firmly is thy throne from of old." The passages he quotes from 2 Sam. vii. 13, 16, and 1 Kings ii. 45 to prove his erroneous rendering of the word, stand decidedly against him; for *יְהִי־נָחֹן* (*Yihyeh Nachon*) in the 16th verse of 2 Sam. vii. mean, "shall be established," because *Nachon* by itself signifies "established." We have given this note to the reader for the purpose of showing the result of trying to force fancy into a firm oracle. In Dr H.'s work on the Psalms, many instances could be brought forward in which he has entirely perverted the senses; instances of this kind especially, where references to immortality and eternity occur, which he seeks thus to banish. It is lamentable to see a man of so much learning plunging his talents into a bottomless sea of unclean waters.

In the seventh year of David's reign over Judah at Hebron,* a quarrel broke out between Ishbosheth, the feeble son of Saul, at that time king of eleven tribes of Israel, and Abner, his chief general, who promoted him to the throne, and kept him on it for seven years. Abner therefore said unto Ishbosheth, among other words, "So do God to Abner, and more also (the usual mode of swearing by God at that time), that as the Lord hath sworn to David (*i.e.* to give him the kingdom of Saul), even so will I do to him; to translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba." 2 Sam. iii. 6—11. Thus we see that Samuel must have conveyed the promise of the kingdom unto David by an oath in the name of God, and that this was well known among Israel. Accordingly, Abner sent messengers to David, on his behalf, saying, "Whose is the land? (*i.e.* to whom doth the government over Israel belong? Is it not to thyself?) Make thy league with me, and behold my hand shall be with thee to bring about all Israel unto thee." 2 Sam. iii. 12. David, who waited patiently for the doings of the Lord during seven years, now saw that Jehovah, his faithful God, was about to fulfil his promise to him regarding the kingdom. But as to Abner's proposal, David answered him in the following words: "Well, I will make a league with thee: but one thing I require of thee, that is, Thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face." 2 Sam. iii. 13.† At the same time, David sent messengers to Ishbosheth, her brother, to demand that Michal, his wife, should be restored unto him. As soon as Michal was put into Abner's hand, the latter prepared Israel for the revolution he was to bring about, by sending messengers or letters unto all the elders of Israel to the following effect: "Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you. Now then do it: for the Lord hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David will I save my people Israel out of the hands of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies." 2 Sam. iii. 17, 18. Abner energetically prosecuted his design, and was soon so far successful in carrying it out, that even the tribe of Benjamin were ready to put them-

* That David's reign at Hebron over Judah alone continued upwards of seven years, we have the authority of 2 Sam. ii. 11, v. 5; 1 Kings ii. 11; 1 Chron. xxix. 27. Several writers, however, on this part of sacred history, have fallen into error on this point by misunderstanding the passage in 2 Sam. ii. 10, where it said, "Ishbosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years." From this expression they are led to conclude that the whole reign of Ishbosheth continued only for two years; but this is a great mistake, for the two years refer only to the time when the war between him and David, as recorded in that chapter, took place, and that was in the third year of his reign. But this has nothing to do with the real time of his reign, which certainly was nearly seven years. A statement of the same kind is made in 1 Sam. xiii. 1, but which refers to the history recorded after, and which took place at the time mentioned.

† How far David was justifiable in that act, any unprejudiced mind will see, when we remember that David purchased her at the hazard of his life. (See 1 Sam. xviii. 20—27.) She was then married to him according to the law; but Saul, when he drove David into exile, took her and gave her to Phalti, the son of Laish, from Gallim, 1 Sam. xxv. 44. Now, the fault lay with Phalti, who took another man's wife without her being legally divorced from her husband. David indeed might have been partly actuated at this time by political considerations in putting forth his claim for Saul's daughter as his dearly purchased wife, but at the same time it was strictly lawful, generous, prudent, and timely. He had not made this demand before, in order not to appear as stirring up war against the house of Saul. But now, when the chief general proposed to enter into a league with him, it was not necessary for him to delay his claim any longer, but merely to assure the house of Saul that she had been taken unlawfully from him.

selves under David's sceptre. Accordingly, he then took Michal, David's wife, and went to him at Hebron. He and the twenty men of his retinue were cordially received by him, and he made for them a royal entertainment; and, after having arranged their plans, about which they had entered into confederation, for the government of the kingdom, David dismissed them in peace.*

During Abner's interview with David, Joab, David's general, was not in Hebron. But very soon after Abner was dismissed, Joab and his army returned from a successful expedition against some of the neighbouring hordes, loaded with the rich spoil of their enemies. Soon after Joab's arrival he was informed of the kind reception which Abner had received from David, and probably of the whole transaction between him and the king. Joab immediately felt that Abner's plan would be injurious to his pride and ambition—that should Abner bring about the matter which he had undertaken, he would find in him a most powerful rival—that David in that case would likely make Abner his chief general, and place him in an inferior position. Filled with malignant jealousy and hatred, he went to the king and wished to persuade him that Abner came as a spy, that he was not sincere in supporting the king's interests, and that he should recall the league he had entered into with him, and make it void. But, finding that he could not prevail with David, Joab, without intimating his design, treacherously sent messengers to meet Abner on the road and to recal him in David's name. When, accordingly, Abner returned to Hebron, Joab met him before he reached the city and before David could be aware of it, and, having taken him into one of the gates or towers of the wall of the city, there assassinated him, pretending that thereby he had avenged himself of the blood of Asahel his brother, whom Abner, in self-defence, had slain, some years before, in the field of battle. 2 Sam. ii. 23. David was soon informed of that lamentable event. And in the extreme anguish of his generous and gentle soul over the villanous crime perpetrated by Joab, and the terrible end of the great Abner, he exclaimed, "I and my kingdom are guiltless before Jehovah for ever, from the blood of Abner the son of Ner. Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that is sick, or a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread!" 2 Sam. iii. 28, 29. But the influence of Joab was too powerful for David to attempt at that time to avenge upon him the innocent blood of Abner. He therefore said unto him and unto all the people, when the funeral was

* That David acted justly and prudently in entering upon terms with Abner about the kingdom of Israel, is apparent from the following considerations:—(1.) David's right to the kingdom was not of man—it was given to him by Jehovah, the King of kings. (2.) All Israel knew this, and even Saul and Jonathan acknowledged it twice to David. See 1 Sam. xx. 15, 16, xxiii. 17, 18, xxiv. 20, 21, xxvi. 25. (3.) Abner and Ishbosheth both acted in opposition to the well-known divine arrangement, when the latter accepted the kingdom, and the former established him in it; it was only, therefore, an acknowledgment on the part of Abner that he had acted wrong, and repented of it, that now he wished to establish David in it. (4.) The transaction had nothing in it, like a secret conspiracy against Ishbosheth, for Abner told him openly what he was about to do; and so his correspondence with the elders of Israel was quite open, and in the face of the sun. (5.) Neither Abner, nor David, nor Israel, had any intention of injuring Ishbosheth personally: their only design was to take from him the kingdom, to which he had no just claim, and to restore it to David, to whom it had been assigned by Divine authority. That no evil was intended against him personally may be inferred from the fact, that David put to death his murderers, because they had slain (as he called him) an *innocent man*, 2 Sam. iv. 11.

to take place, "Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And King David himself followed the bier (verse 31.) And when the body of Abner was buried, David, as chief mourner, broke out into lamentation over the grave, and all the people melted into tears along with him." The king then uttered the following pathetic lamentation, which must have entered into the heart of Joab the murderer like a sharp dagger, while it touched the deepest cords of sympathy in the minds of the whole audience, and made their tears run the more profusely :

"O should Abner have died the death of a rebel !*
Thy hands have never been bound,
And thy feet were never put in fetters,
Now art thou fallen before the sons of violence."

The import of these words is, that Abner, who had never been taken captive by his enemies, and had never been bound in fetters as a prisoner of war, must have perished suddenly by treachery and fraud, and without an opportunity of defending himself. When David uttered this, the people multiplied their tears, and David himself kept that day as a day of mourning and fasting ; he was clothed in sackcloth and ashes, and ate nothing until the evening. Nor could the people fail to perceive that David was completely innocent of having any part in that mournful event : the conviction of this was highly pleasing to them. Moreover, David said unto his servants, "Know ye not that there is a Prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel ! and I am at present weak (my government yet in an unsettled state, and myself weak to deal with such a powerful man as Joab) though an anointed king ; and these men the sons of Zeuriah are too hard for me : the Lord shall reward the evil doer according to his wickedness." 2 Sam. iii. 33—39.

To this melancholy period several of the Psalms seem to belong. This will appear from the internal evidence which we shall adduce in connection with the translation and exposition. Psalm xxviii. seems to have been the first in order written by David on that occasion. It contains the justification which he made of himself after the murder perpetrated by Joab at Hebron. It bears all the marks of his first agitation after the fearful event, the grief which it occasioned having yet been fresh in his mind. It would appear that he had gone to Kirjath-jearim, where the ark of the covenant rested at that time, and made his confession before God, who knew that he had no hand in the murder of Abner.

PS. XXVIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XLV.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

1. Unto thee, O Jehovah, do I cry ;
O my Rock, keep not silence from me :

* See explanation of the word בֶּזַע (Naval), which is always erroneously rendered "fool," in Psalm xiv. chronologically Psalm xxv.

Lest, if thou shouldest keep silence from me,
I shall become like unto those that go down to the pit.

To understand fully how these strong expressions would apply to David, at the period to which we have assigned the composition of this Psalm, let us examine shortly what was his situation at that time. King over a single tribe of Israel, eleven other tribes were opposed to him. Though Abner's late message was favourable, still he had been so heinously murdered, that it was not improbable that all Israel would rise in the greatest fury to avenge the cruel death of their deservedly favourite general. Philistia was also arrayed against him with all her forces, and malignant hatred to the Israelitish nation; and though inactive, so long as it appeared that the kingdom of Israel was weakened by division, still David had reason to dread her plans and movements as soon as any change in the government should take place, and above all, he saw himself entirely in the power of a wicked and villanous murderer, whose outrageous crime he was not able to punish. In such circumstances the language in the first verse of the Psalm is easily understood. David prays God to answer him speedily, lest he should become like those who go down into the pit—lest Joab should deal with him as he had done with Abner, over whose grave (a pit) he had recently shed many tears.

2. Hear the voice of my supplication, when I cry aloud unto thee :
When I lift up my hands towards the Oracle of thy sanctuary.

This last expression confirms what has been stated in the introduction to this Psalm, namely, that David went to the place where the Ark stood at that time to pour forth his supplications in the presence of God, as the Cherubim and Shechinah were considered at that time. That קֹדֶשׁ (Kodesh) often signifies the "sanctuary," and even the most holy, as well as מִקְדָּשׁ (Mikdash), may be seen from Lev. xvi. 2, 3, 16, 17, 20, &c. David then proceeds, praying the Lord that he would vindicate his innocence of the grievous event, and not punish him along with the treacherous and wicked Joab, seeing that he had not the least knowledge of the crime that had been perpetrated.

3. Draw me not along with the wicked, and with the workers of crimes,
Who speak peace with their neighbours, while mischief is in their heart.
4. Render to them according to their operations,
And according to the wickedness of their evil works :
Even according to the deeds of their hands, render unto them—
Requite unto them their desert.
5. For they pay no attention to Jehovah's operations,
Neither do they regard the works of his hands :
He shall destroy them, and not build them up.

The expression "draw me not away," in verse 3d, means "carry me not off" in thy judgment; *i.e.*, as thou wilt doubtless, sooner or later, rise in judgment against such wicked and treacherous men, then do not carry me off along with them (comp. here Num. xvi. 26.) Verse 4th contains the expression of David's sentiments when he pronounced a solemn curse on Joab for the vile murder of Abner. 2 Sam. iii. 28, 29. The reason for invoking the judgment of Jehovah upon Joab and those who took part with him is given in verse 5th, "For they pay no attention to Jehovah's operations." Joab was with David during his exile. He had witnessed the holy patience with which he waited for the doings of the Lord, how generously he had treated even the wicked and bloody Saul, who sought his life, and prevented his men from touching him, but told them that there was a Judge in heaven to whom vengeance belonged, and that he would certainly soon repay him according to his works. 1 Sam. xxvi. 10. Now, if Joab had taken the least lesson from what he had seen in David, especially as he now saw the fulfilment of David's declaration in the above-quoted passage by the terrible judgment which overtook Saul, he could not have acted toward Abner as he had done, but would rather have submitted to the doings of the Lord, and said, "If it be the Lord's will to promote Abner to greater honour than me, then his will be done." But this expression may also refer to Joab in another respect, namely, that had he paid attention to the operations of God, and the mysterious ways by which he establishes the works of his hands, he would have seen the hand of God in Abner's project, and stood in awe of it, waiting the events of divine providence. But the fact was, that Joab was a faithless and wicked man, and, to satisfy his ungodly ambition and jealousy, thought nothing of taking away the life of such a great man, in the face of a righteous, holy, and avenging God. David then proceeds to praise God for mercies already received, and for his mighty assistance afforded him in times past.

6. Blessed be Jehovah, for he hath heard the voice of my supplications.
7. Jehovah is my strength and my shield;
In him my heart trusted, and I was helped;—
Now shall my heart exult, and with my song will I praise him.
8. Jehovah is the strength of his people—
A fortress of salvation to his anointed is He.
9. O save thy people, and bless thine inheritance,
And feed them and exalt them for evermore.

David's cause was now quite identified with that of the people of Israel in general; his welfare and prosperity depended entirely upon theirs, and so did their interests depend upon his. Hence it is that though David, in verses 6 and 7, evidently refers to his own experience, namely, the answers he received from God to his prayers during the persecution under Saul, yet when he comes to pray for the future, he is no more alone; he has a flock whose welfare he must seek like that of his own, and therefore he prays for them as well as for himself. Under the word לָמוֹ (Lamo) in verse 8, we must understand לְעַמּוֹ (Leamo) to his people. This is evident from

עֲמֵיךְ (Amecha) of verse 9; it is the people Israel whose prosperity and exaltation were now identical with his own.

The next Psalm, which seems to belong to the same period, is the 36th in the common version. This Psalm is as remarkable for its obscurity according to the common version, as it is for its purity and fulness when correctly translated, and applied to the particular part of David's history now under consideration. Few passages, indeed, in the Book of Psalms have puzzled commentators more than the first two verses of this Psalm; and the farther they have gone from the literal meaning of the text in search of explanation, the farther is their rendering from being anything like intelligible—the more they have indulged in speculation, the more obscure is their interpretation of its meaning. All this is owing to their ignorance of the occasion on which it was written, and hence of the events of which it treats. As soon as the occasion of its composition is discovered, and its application established, every obscurity disappears, and the Psalm is bright and fraught with meaning. Now let the reader bear in mind that Joab wished to excuse his crime in the murder of Abner, under a desire to avenge the death of his brother Asahel. David, who is now in Jehovah's sanctuary, or before the vail of the ark and the cherubim in Kirjath-jearim, is filled with the Spirit of God, who informs him that it was not to avenge the death of his brother Asahel, but from pure malice and wickedness, actuated by a spirit of ambition, that Joab perpetrated the cruel murder of Abner.

PS. XXXVI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XLVI.

(Lamnatzeach), "To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A PSALM OF DAVID, THE SERVANT OF GOD.

1. The oracle within my heart ascribeth crime to the wicked man,
As there is no fear of God before his eyes.
2. For he flattered him with his eyes,
In purpose that he might find out his sin, as the reason of his hatred.

The Hebrew word נֵאֻם (Neum) occurs oftentimes in the Scriptures. It is used by the prophets to denote that afflatus of the Spirit through which they were enabled to speak of things which, to uninspired men, are hid in obscurity. When it appears in conjunction with the name of Jehovah as נֵאֻם יְהוָה (Neum Jehovah), it denotes not only that Jehovah speaks, but also the instrument through which he speaks, i.e. the oracle, or spirit, or power of prophecy, by which his servants were enabled and authorised to speak in his name. In short, the word Neum denotes "the oracular advice or revelation which the prophet received by the impulse of the Spirit within him." As the Psalmist had just designated himself in the

title of this Psalm "the servant of God," and as he was one of those servants of God who "spake according as the Spirit gave them utterance," so he says in the first verse, that in spite of all the excuses of Joab, who declared that in the murder of Abner he was actuated by no other motive than that of avenging the blood of Asahel his brother, "the oracle within my heart ascribes crime to the wicked man," *i.e.*, the crime of wilful murder, perpetrated only in a spirit of hateful ambition, and not, as he pretends, in revenge for the death of his brother. In the original the expression לַרָשָׁע (Larasha) is even more emphatic. It is not only "to the wicked man," but to the criminal in question—to the guilty Joab. The first reason assigned for this conclusion is—"there is no fear of God before his eyes." What sin, or what crime, will appear to a man too wicked, when he does not stand in awe of the high and terrible God of vengeance? But in the second verse, the reason assigned for this villainous murder is more defined and more forcible, for there David speaks of the manner in which it was committed—the treachery which he practised upon his victim—how he flattered him with his eyes when he went to meet him out of the gates of the city—how he saluted him as a friend, and thereby removed all suspicion from his mind—in this way brought him to the place of slaughter. In all this there was no appearance of open revenge, and even this he had himself renounced only a few hours after the death of Asahel, when he addressed Abner in a very becoming manner, and never even alluded to the matter, as if acknowledging that no guilt could be ascribed to Abner, as he had done it in self-defence, and after several times warning. 2 Sam. ii. 26—28. But now it would appear that all his preparations had been made in malice, and that he had recourse to the plea of revenging his brother's death, only as a pretext to cover his guilt; "for," says David, "he flattered him with his eyes," *i.e.* Joab flattered Abner with his eyes—met him with a smiling countenance, in order to remove all suspicion, and "in purpose to find out his sin," *i.e.* to find out Abner's sin of slaying Asahel, "as the reason of his hatred," *i.e.* of his revenge—the pretext of his cruelty and of his malicious and wilful murder. David then proceeds to describe Joab's character.

3. The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit ;
He hath ceased to act wisely—to do good.
4. Iniquity he deviseth even upon his bed :
He hath placed himself in a way which is not right,—
Wickedness he doth not abhor.

Having thus described, in the first four verses, the motives, principles, actions, and designs of the wicked Joab, David now raises his thoughts heavenwards, and begins to describe the justice and righteousness of Jehovah, and his mercy and loving-kindness toward those that fear him and seek shelter in the shadow of his wings.

5. O Jehovah, thy lovingkindness is in the heavens ;
Thy faithfulness reacheth to the skies.
6. Thy righteousness equalleth the mighty mountains ;
Thy judgments equal a vast abyss :
Thou, O Jehovah, preservest man and beast.

7. How precious is thy tender mercy, O God :
O that the sons of men would take shelter in the shadow of
thy wings !
8. They would be fed with the riches of thine house,
And thou wouldest make them drink of the stream of thy
pleasures.
9. For with thee is the fountain of life ;
In thy light alone we can see light.*
10. Extend thy tender mercy to those that know thee,
And thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

The great contrast between the lot and condition of the wicked, and those of the child of God, ends with verse 10. As in the first four verses the character and condition of the former are described, so in the following six verses the sweet enjoyments of the heavenly-minded are represented ; and David in verse 10, entreats God to extend all the happiness spoken of in the preceding verses, to those that know him, and to the upright in heart, *i.e.*, to David himself, who is styled in the superscription of the Psalm, "David the servant of God," and who often describes himself under a similar character as "a devoted and upright servant of God." But in verse 11th he returns to the grievous calamity which had given rise to the meditations contained in the Psalm, and entreats the Lord, who knows the secrets of men's hearts, to vindicate his character before the world—to reveal his innocency of the murder of Abner ; and in order that this should be made manifest, to continue to bless him, to exalt him and to do him good, so that all men might see that one so highly favoured of God could certainly have had no hand in the horrid crime perpetrated by Joab.

11. Involve me not in the footsteps of arrogance,
And judge me not as having had a hand with the wicked :
12. For there have the workers of iniquity fallen,
They were cast down that they could rise no more.

The expression in verse 12th, "For there," must be understood as referring to Gilboa, and this David uses as a reason for his eager desire to be entirely freed from censure—that he should not be "involved" in blame as having joined the arrogant and wicked Joab in his footsteps to shed innocent blood, or that his hand was in any respect with him ; for the judgments which the Lord had recently executed on the ungodly there, were terrific and appalling ; "For there," namely in Gilboa, "have the workers of iniquity fallen," or "fell the workers of iniquity," *i.e.*, those who had shed innocent blood. "They were cast down" by the hand and power of the Almighty Judge, and hence no wonder "that they could rise no more."

* "In thy light alone," *i.e.*, by means of thy light alone it is, that we are enlightened to discern the glory of thy attributes (as described in the preceding verses), and the vastness of thy righteousness, judgments, and tender mercies. As we could have no conception of the glory of the sun had not the Creator endowed us with the organ of vision, so we cannot comprehend the glory of God unless his Spirit, who is light, enlightens our souls, then we see light in or by, his light.

The Psalm next in order which must belong to the same period is the xxxix.; this will be seen from its matter and sentiment.

PS. XXXIX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XLVII.

(Lamnatzeach) "To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A SONG OF DAVID TO BE PERFORMED BY JEDUTHUN.

1. I thought, I will guard my steps, not to offend with my tongue—
I will guard my mouth as with a muzzle,
While the wicked is still before me.*
2. So was I silent as if I had been dumb,
I withheld myself from doing what was right;†
But my sore became aggravated:
3. My heart became hot within me while I mused;
The fire burst out in flames;
Therefore have I spoken with my tongue.

When the prophet Jeremiah saw that all the warnings, threatenings, and exhortations he addressed to the Israelites were unavailing, and that, whilst the wicked were unpunished of God, his persecutions increased, and the word of God was made unto him "a reproach and derision daily," then he resolved not to speak any longer in the name of God. But he soon found out that "the word of God was as a burning fire in his heart, shut up in his bones, so that he was weary with forbearing, and could not stay." Then he was obliged to rise up again against the wicked, notwithstanding of the persecution to which it exposed him. Jer. xx. 8, 9. So it was with David in present circumstances. Joab was master over him, and had the command of the whole army, as may be seen from his arrogant address to David. 2 Sam. iii. 24, 25. Accordingly when Joab committed the murder, David was sore afflicted, but remembered at the same time, that though he was king he had not the power to avenge the death of Abner upon him. See 2 Sam. iii. 39; 1 Kings ii. 5. Thus he tells us in verse 1st, that when he reflected that he was unable to deal with the matter to his satisfaction, he resolved to dismiss it entirely from his mind—to give up the very thought of a thing which could only

* אֲמַרְתִּי (Amarti) means oftener "I thought" than "I said," especially when, as in this verse, the speaker is to tell one of his *resolutions* under peculiar circumstances. דֶּרֶךְ (Derech) which we have rendered "steps," signifies the steps taken, or the proceedings adopted, in such circumstances. These steps or proceedings David resolves to guard, or to be cautious with them, for the reason that follows, viz. not to offend, or commit a blunder, with his tongue.

† The word הִשְׁתַּמְטֵהוּ (Hechshelahu) denotes "to remain quiet or inactive." See Judges xviii. 9; 2 Kings ii. 3, 5, 7, 9; Isa. lvii. 11, &c. So here David tells us that, according to his resolution in verse 1st, he "was silent as if he had been dumb." Then he describes his silence to have been so strict, that he says הִשְׁתַּמְטֵהוּ מִיָּדַי (Hechshethi Mitov), literally, "I remained or kept myself inactive, even from doing what is right, or, 'I withheld myself from doing what was right,' i.e. from speaking against wickedness, to rebuke which is always right.

produce grief, but be productive of no good. The expression, "I will guard my steps," means, "I will behave cautiously in my proceedings" against Joab. The reason he assigns for this is, that he might "not offend with his tongue," i.e. lest he should raise a quarrel which would result in no good. "I will guard my mouth as with a muzzle, while the wicked (namely Joab) is still before me," i.e. while he is stronger than I, and judgment cannot at present be executed against him. David, moreover, had seen the mysterious ways by which Jehovah had advanced him to the throne of Judah, and how he had removed Saul out of the way, and therefore he might have thought that Abner's death was also decreed by God, in order to bring about the fulfilment of his promises unto him, to establish his throne over all Israel. Accordingly he tells us in verse 2d, that he fulfilled his resolution for a time; he kept silence, like a dumb man, so as not to speak openly and expose wickedness, and cry aloud against violence and murder. But the Psalmist himself acknowledges that in doing so, "he withheld himself from doing what was right." Along with Jeremiah David found that he could not remain by his resolution—the grief returned again and again—the sore became more and more aggravated—it was like a fire within him—it burst out into open flames, until, like Jeremiah, he was "weary with forbearing, and could not stay." But the fact was, that by both of them the Holy Spirit had oracles to be sent forth to future generations, and these were to be based on the peculiar circumstances into which they were thrown; accordingly it was the Spirit within them who kindled the fire in their bones and in their hearts, and forced them to speak. Moreover it is worthy of notice, that both of these prophets are alike exceedingly cast down after the impulse of the Spirit had overpowered them; both of them break forth in strains of complaints and lamentations about their sufferings, and about the shortness of human life, accompanied with vanity and grief; both immediately afterwards despise their own life, and speak with displeasure of their existence. Jeremiah does so in language even more bitter and plaintive than David. Jer. xx. 17, 18. David thus complains—

4. O Jehovah, reveal unto me mine end,
And what is to be the extent of my days :
O that I could know wherein I fail !
5. Behold, thou hast limited my days to a few palm-breadths,
And my whole existence is like nothing before thee :
Ah ! how are all men placed in the midst of vanity, Selah, always.

Here let the reader again consider the difficult and trying circumstances in which David was placed at this period. He was indeed king, but without the power; the wicked murderer stood boldly before him, but he could not act as his conscience would have dictated. He resolved to dismiss the grievous thought out of his mind, but in vain; the sacred fuel burned within him, and the Spirit said—speak. How was he to act? To retain the murderer as his chief general he was afraid, it might involve him in sin and be displeasing to God; to dismiss and punish him he has no power. Oppressed with grief in his mind, and pricked in his soul, he is obliged to cry aloud, to expose and condemn a thing which he could not

make an inch better than he found it; and in such perplexity it is that he prays to God to reveal unto him his end, and the real length of his earthly pilgrimage, in order that he might know "wherein he failed," or what he neglected to do in present circumstances. This, however, is but the *prima facie* meaning of the expressions in verses 4 and 5. David seems to have been labouring under fear and doubt, when he felt the impulse of the Spirit within him, not allowing him to rest, and again and again kindling within his soul the fire which he so naturally sought to subdue. He was afraid that he had not done his duty in the matter, and doubted what his duty really would be. The language of his prayer that the Lord would reveal unto him "his end," may also be understood as having a reference to the "result of matters," *i.e.* whether he was to continue to be ever dependent on that wicked man, and to what extent of time or of days, for in this way alone he could know wherein he failed or how to act—whether to wait, or instantly to take the necessary steps.* In verse 5 he explains more fully the reason of his eager desire to be directed in such troublous times, when the contradiction of sinners was so strong against him; and this reason is, the shortness of human life—the utter vanity of his existence, so that there remained no time as it were for confusion and perplexity. This mode of argument he extends to the second part of the Psalm, where he specifies more fully the particulars of his complaint, and winds up the whole subject into one special request.

6. Ah! how doth mankind pass on like a shadow!
Ah! how vain is their busy tumult!
They accumulate heaps, but know not who shall gather them in,†
7. But now, O Lord, what is my expectation?
My waiting in hope is directed unto thee alone.
8. Deliver me from all my transgressions—
Make me not the reproach of the fool.

David, having stated in verse 6 the vanity of human existence, and the folly of men who, forgetting the shortness of their days, spend all their energies in gathering vain heaps for others, turns, in verse 7, to state his expectation to be quite of a different character—that, instead of gathering eagerly the treasures of vanishing time, he has set all his expectation and

* The fact is, that David never had it in his power to avenge on Joab the murder of Abner, for when Joab saw that in the general Amasa he would find an equally powerful rival as he had found in Abner, he soon murdered him also (2 Sam. xx. 10); and this he did, because he knew that David was likely to avenge the insult which he had cast upon him (2 Sam. xix. 5-7), and make Amasa chief general in his stead. All this shows that during his whole life time David could not do any thing unto Joab, until on his death-bed he left his judgment to Solomon. 1 Kings ii. 6.

† The term אִישׁ (Ish) of the first clause denotes here the species of "mankind," and not a single man, and hence the three following verbs are of a mixed character. Two of them are in the singular, יִצְבֹּר (Yitzbor), "he, *i.e.* mankind, accumulates heaps," or treasures, and וְלֹא יָדַע (Velo Yeda) "and he, *i.e.* mankind, knoweth not," who shall gather them in: the former verb יִצְבֹּר (Yehemayun), "they, *i.e.* mankind, make a busy tumult," are busy in accumulating the heaps of perishing riches.

all his desire in Jehovah, in the Eternal One, who has provided eternal treasures for his children. Accordingly, he supplicates in verse 8, that the Lord would "deliver him from all his transgressions, and not make him the reproach of the fool." And in this verse we discover the whole import of the Psalm. As he laboured under the apprehension of guilt arising from the impression, that the impulse of the Spirit within him allowed him no rest because he had not avenged Abner's blood, therefore he prays in the first clause of this verse, that, as it was not in his power to do so, the Lord would deliver him from that transgression. On the other hand, as he was compelled by the Spirit to rebuke openly the crime of Joab, and hence even without attempting to avenge Abner's blood, had exposed himself to reproach on the part of Joab, who would try to overturn and crush him, therefore he prays in the second clause, "Make me not the reproach of the fool," or of the wicked rebel.* David then proceeds to excuse his hastily formed resolution to keep silence, as recorded in the first two verses, stating the reason, and praying pardon of God:—

9. When I became as dumb, and opened not my mouth,
It was because thou hadst done it.
10. O remove from me thy stroke :
By the conflict of thy Spirit, do I waste away.†
11. With rebukes for iniquity thou didst punish the man,
And madest his excellency to waste away like a moth ;
Ah, how vain are all men ! Selah, continually.

To enter fully into the Psalmist's meaning in these three verses, we must in the first place consider verses 9 and 11, which belong to the argument, and then the import of the prayer of verse 10. David, wishing to spread before the Lord his first resolution to bury the crime of Joab in silence, says in verse 9, "When I became as dumb, and opened not my mouth," *i.e.* when I resolved not to speak any more about the subject, "it was because thou hadst done it," *i.e.* because I was in doubt lest all this was brought about by thy irresistible decree, and for the further fulfilment of thy promises to me, as in the sudden and awful destruction of Saul and his associates thy promise was fulfilled unto me, and the way paved for my promotion to the throne of Judah. But in the 11th verse he gives a further explanation of what he said in verse 9, namely that he thought "that the Lord had done it." There he declares that in the destruction of Abner he saw also the righteous judgments of God executed; and though Joab could by no means be excused for his crime of murder, still it was reasonable to

* See, as before, the explanation of the word נָבֵל (Naval) in Ps. xiv., chronologically Ps.

xxv., verse 1.

† מִתְגַּרֵּת יָדְךָ (Mitgrath Yodecha), commonly rendered "by the blow of thine hand," here means "by the conflict of thy Spirit," expressive of the uneasiness produced by the Spirit within him—the fire which the Spirit kindled within his soul when he resolved to keep silence, as stated in verses 2 and 3. The word תִּגְרִית (Tigrath) signifies "a stirring up," "a struggling," "a raising of contention or war." (2 Kings xiv. 10; 2 Chron. xxv. 19; Ps. cxi., chronologically Ps. ix. 2. See exposition *in loco*.) So when it is spoken of Jehovah's יָד (Yod), it very often means the power of the Spirit upon the prophet. (See Isa. viii. 11; Ezek. iii. 14, 22, xxxvii. 1, in which places the "hand" of God means the power of his Spirit.) Which passages are worthy of particular notice, showing the constraint that the inspiration laid on the inspired. (See Introduction, p. 10.)

suppose (which was really the fact) that Abner, in meeting with his death at Hebron, suffered for the sin he had recently committed. 2 Sam. iii. 7. "With rebukes for iniquity thou didst punish the man." The word **יָשׁוּב** (*Ish*) is often used to denote a "great man," a "man of rank," a "significant man," or to point out the man in question. Of the great man in question here, namely, Abner, David says that he was "punished with rebukes for iniquity," which, if we trace Abner's misfortune to its source, may refer to the fact of his having been rebuked by Ishbosheth, as the reason that induced him to go to Hebron (2 Sam. iii. 7—10), there to suffer the punishment due to his sin—to die there an ignominious death. Thus Jehovah "made his excellency to waste away like a moth."

Having stated the reasons that induced him to resolve upon keeping silence in the whole matter, David prays in verse 10 that the Lord would remove from him the mental conflict into which he had been cast—that the impulse of the Spirit within him might no longer disturb his mind—no longer distort his thoughts—no longer disquiet his conscience. Such is the import of the prayer in verse 10—"O remove from me thy stroke;" and need we add that the stroke of God in the conscience of a good man is the severest of all plagues? He then gives the reason of his humble supplication, for "by the conflict of thy Spirit do I waste away;" the continual rebukes and chastisements of thy Spirit were so painful—the fuel added daily to keep up the flame within his heart so grievous, that he could not remain at ease. The conclusion of the Psalm contains a prayer to the same purpose.

12. Hear my prayer, O Jehovah :
 Incline thine ear to my loud cries ;
 On account of my tears, keep not silent :
 For I am a stranger with thee,
 A sojourner like all my forefathers.
13. O spare me, that I may recover strength,
 Before I go hence, and be no more.

The last two clauses of verse 12, and the whole of verse 13, rest upon the argument contained in verses 4 and 5, where also the Psalmist pleads the shortness of his days, and the continuance of trouble and grief; and such was the lot appointed to him by the bodily sufferings that he endured under Saul, as well as the mental conflict which he now sustained. Because of the shortness of human existence, David calls himself here a stranger and sojourner with God in this world: he felt as one who was not in his native land, but had come to a land or city to remain there only for a time. As in verse 4 he made the shortness of his earthly life the reason of his anxiety for knowing "wherein he failed"—and the time is too short for any one to remain in uncertainty whether he was right with God or not, seeing he may be called suddenly away, and have no opportunity for repentance;—so after he had stated in verse 12 that he was only a stranger and sojourner in this world, he then returns to his prayer that "the Lord would spare him," or remove from him the "stroke and conflict of conscience," mentioned in verse 10; and this he supplicates, in order that he might recover spiritual strength—that he might enjoy perfect peace with God, before he was called to depart hence from the present scene of pro-

bation, into that place where there is no more time for repentance, and where every man shall be judged according to his deeds, be they good or bad.*

* We take this opportunity of again presenting our readers with a specimen of German mysticism and delusion. It is suggested by the subject of the Psalm, and is fitted to show at once the false basis on which Hengstenberg, in his misinterpretation of some of the noblest and sublimest Psalms, has raised up a superstructure of error, and the bitter fruits which may be gathered from such works of darkness. Thus he finds in this Psalm, according to his interpretation of its meaning, evidence for bringing the charge against David of murmuring against God and grumbling at his dispensations, as well as unbelief in the doctrine of a future state of recompence or reward. To reconcile this interpretation with the character of David, he says—"It is not to be overlooked, that the Psalm possesses in part an *Old Testament* character. While still there was no clear insight into a *future state of being*," &c. Here, Christian reader, is the source of Hengstenberg's error, and that which has led him to construct a false and soul-ensnaring exposition of the holy oracles of God. Having at the outset laid down a false system of interpretation, in order to preserve its uniformity, he is induced to banish Christ, the immortality of the soul, and a future state, altogether out of the Psalms, yea even out of the whole Old Testament. Such a system is plainly at variance with the testimony of Christ, who said, "the Psalms speak of me," and not less so with the repeated testimony of the apostles, who maintain again and again that the suffering Old Testament saints found a chief source of comfort in the doctrine of a future state, where immortal souls should rest from the toils and labours of this life, and enjoy the presence of God throughout eternity. How directly contradictory to the declaration of the apostle Paul, "that Abraham looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Heb. xi. 10. Again, "But now they (the Patriarchs) desire a better country, that is an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city." Ver. 16: and again, "others were tortured, *not accepting deliverance*; that they might obtain a *better resurrection*." Heb. xi. 35. See also verses 36-39.

But leaving the testimonies of the apostles (with which it would not be difficult to fill many pages), let us return to the Old Testament Scriptures, and see if such a doctrine, when judged by them, will stand the test. If, according to Hengstenberg's declaration, the Old Testament saints had no clear insight into a future state of being, then we might ask what they could have understood by the translation of Enoch and Elijah into heaven? Did they imagine that they were dissolved in the air? What does Hannah mean when she says, "Jehovah killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up again?" 1 Sam. ii. 6. How was Eli the High Priest to see the calamity which Jehovah was to bring upon his descendants after many days? 1 Sam. ii. 31, 32. What did Abigail mean, when she said to David, "But the soul of my Lord shall be bound up in the bundle of life with Jehovah thy God?" 1 Sam. xxv. 29. Whatever may be the explanation of Saul's resorting to the means of bringing up Samuel from the dead—whatever may be thought of the witch of Endor, we would ask the German Theologian, How it was that it entered into Saul's mind at all to bring up Samuel from the dead, after having been for several years in his grave, if there was no knowledge of, or *no clear insight* into a *future state of being* during the Old Testament ages? Was it the decayed dust, or the immortal spirit of Samuel, that Saul wished to consult about things to come? What did Nathan the prophet mean, when he said to David, "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever *before thee*?" 2 Sam. vii. 16. But neither time nor space will allow us to illustrate in detail the evidence furnished in the queries we have stated, and we can only add the following texts. Job xix. 23-27, xxxiv. 14; Isa. xxvi. 19, xxxiii. 13-17, xlv. 17. 21-25, lxvi. 22-24; Ezek. xxxvii. 1-14; Dan. xii. 2, 3. These—and other passages might have been quoted—may suffice to show the vanity of a man who is bold enough to assert that there was no clear insight into a future state of being under the former dispensation; but no number of passages, we suspect, would suffice to reach conviction to such a mind, if the Psalms failed to convince him that David's desire was set upon, and his heart much comforted by, the prospect of a future state of being. See Hos. xiv. 9.

But to return to the Psalm before us. Hengstenberg, who dares to assert that the Old Testament saints had no clear insight into a future state of being, pretends to find in this Psalm a faithless and heartless murmuring on the part of David against God. Accordingly, when he comes to the 7th verse, which he renders thus: "And now whereupon wait I, Lord? I hope in thee." He adds, "It is commonly expounded: 'since everything earthly is fugitive and transitory.' But we must rather expound, since thou showest thyself so *hard*. For it was *God's hardness* upon which the Psalmist had complained in verses 4-6, and the transitoriness of life he had thought of only in so far as it furnished an evidence of his *hardness*." The words: Whereupon wait I, Lord? refer to the supposition, that man cannot exist without an object of hope. The answer: My hope stands upon thee, comes quite unexpectedly after what had preceded. That the Psalmist still throws himself into the arms of God, of whose *hardness* he had so complained, is a wonder that *mocks* every natural explanation."

We venture to hope, that no real Christian in this country, who has not yet imbibed the ra-

When the sad tidings of Abner's death at Hebron reached the feeble Ishbosheth, he was put into a state of great fear and trembling, along with all Israel. By his death, Israel had lost a great and skilful general, and Ishbosheth, his chief supporter and the strongest pillar of his kingdom. Though Ishbosheth was aware of Abner's transactions between David and Israel, still it would appear from 2 Sam. iv. 1, that the tidings of his death inflicted a severe blow on his heart. Probably he cherished the hope of reconciliation, but now all hope of this was gone. But the sudden and mournful death of Ishbosheth soon put an end to his dismay, and opened the eyes of Israel to see the direction in which God was leading them. Two brothers, Baanah and Rechab, captains in the army of Ishbosheth, considering the feeble condition of their prince, and the growing prosperity and power of David, vainly imagined that the latter would prefer them to honour if only they should rid him at once of his rival; and, accordingly, having found access to Ishbosheth, under the treacherous pretext that they were grain merchants, they found him in his chamber reposing upon his bed, and stabbed him to death. The vile murderers then cut off his head, and made haste with it to David at Hebron, expecting now to reap the fruits of the service which they conceived they had done for him. When they came to David with the head of the unfortunate king, they said, "Behold the head of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul thine enemy, who sought thy life; and the Lord hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul and of his seed." 2 Sam. iv. 5—8. How must David's generous and sympathetic heart have burned within him when he beheld the bleeding head of Israel's king? He who spared twice his deadly enemy Saul, and used all his influence to prevent his men from touching his anointed head—how must his soul have mourned when he saw the lamentable end of his son, and the cruel manner in which he had been treated by those two murderers! How unjust the conception they had formed of David's character, and how vain the delusion under which they laboured that he would now congratulate them for their treachery and murder! But the assassins soon found that they had only been deceiving themselves as to his real character and disposition, when he said

tionalistic poison of, alas! deep-sunk Germany, can read such a bold and impious insinuation without abhorrence, nor at the same time without sympathy with the wounded character of pious David. But we feel too much grieved, and the stirring of our spirit too strong, to dwell longer on the painful subject. Though charity might perhaps lead us to think that the man may be sincere in holding such foully corrupt and erroneous sentiments; yet when we advert to the fact, that the poisonous influence has been extensively diffused in this land, and has invaded many a pulpit, our sympathies are moved for the Protestant children of Britain, and our soul refuses to be comforted. "Woe unto the man by whom offence cometh." If he be wandering so far on the mountains of error and destruction, let him beware how he draws the upright children of God after him. If a chemist, through some perversion of mind, were to regard poison as wholesome medicine, and to recommend it as such to the use of others, would not their blood, in the event of their following his fatal prescription, be required at his hands? Would the excuse be accepted, that he was labouring under a mistake? that he did not think the prescription was possessed of deadly qualities? Why did he undertake to be a chemist, to whose hands is entrusted the matter of life and death? But we take nothing to do with the individual personally; our concern is with his published work on the Psalms,—and we give unhesitating utterance to our deliberate conviction regarding it when we say, that it contains most detestable error and soul-destroying poison. And, in the name of the God of truth, we again warn Christians to avoid all contact with it, opposed as it is not only to the Old Testament, but also to the New, and to the express testimony of Christ and his apostles; and therefore opposed in all to the great God of revelation. Our earnest prayer is, that the author may be brought to see his error and delusion in their true light, and to direct his talents into a pure channel, and thus promote the glory of God.

to them, "As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity, when one told me, saying, Behold Saul is dead (thinking to have brought good tidings), I took hold on him and slew him in Ziklag, who thought that I would have given him a reward for his tidings, 2 Sam. i. 6, 10, and 13—15, how much more when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? Shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth? And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up over the pool at Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth and buried it in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron." 2 Sam. iv. 9—12.

While on the one hand, the conduct of David on the occasion of Abner's death, and also the manner in which he had dealt with the assassins of their king, must have convinced Israel that his hands were perfectly free from blame in the matter of their death, and that in all his ways he was disposed to act a just and upright part; on the other hand, they could not fail to perceive that Jehovah's hand was in all these events, and that his almighty and omniscient providence had brought them to pass, in order that he might execute his threatenings against Saul and fulfil his promises to David. Accordingly, without loss of time, all the tribes of Israel came to him at Hebron, and addressed him in the following words, "Behold we are thy bone and thy flesh. Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel; and the Lord said to thee, 'Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a prince over Israel.'" 2 Sam. v. 1, 2. Thus all the tribes of Israel entered into league with David, and he was anointed king over all Israel. At his inauguration, at Hebron, there were present, not only above three hundred and forty thousand mighty men of Israel of all the tribes, with all the elders and rulers, but also three thousand of the most influential men of the tribe of Benjamin, the kindred of Saul, to which Saul belonged. 1 Chron. xii. 23—39. This showed clearly with what cordiality they put themselves under the sceptre of David, according to the word of the Lord by Samuel. On this occasion, David made a royal banquet for the hundreds of thousands of Israel, who feasted and rejoiced at Hebron for three days, assisted by the tribes of Issachar, Zebulun, and Naphtali, who brought bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen; and meat, meal, cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep abundantly; for there was joy in Israel. 1 Chron. xii. 40.

As we have stated elsewhere,* David had long before fixed his eye upon Mount Zion, which was situated in that part of Jerusalem that lay in Judah's territory. Accordingly, he embraced this opportunity of the hundreds of thousands of Israel being assembled at Hebron, and at their head, went up to Jerusalem in order to expel the Jebusites from the stronghold of Zion, which for several centuries they had held in possession against all the attacks of Israel. As a remnant of one of those Canaanitish nations, to extirpate which Israel had received the express command of God, David lay under obligations to fulfil in this matter the divine will; and as the most dangerous neighbour to Israel, located in the very centre of their territory, prudence dictated that he should endeavour to rid himself of them at

* See on this subject our exposition of Ps. xiv., in this book Ps. xxv. 7, pp. 117, 148.

once. Aware that he would soon be called to fight with other enemies, it was of the utmost importance for him that he should now drive out from this strong fortress, those whose ravages from time to time, though not mentioned in the sacred history, must have been very great, and who, from the very nature of their situation, especially when Israel was hardly pressed by foreign enemies, would sally forth and complete their misery. Besides, David was an inspired man, and from the impulse of the Spirit he was moved to avail himself of this opportunity to restore the holy mountain to Israel. As Abraham was sent by the command of God from Hebron to Mount Moriah, there to offer up Isaac as a burnt-offering; so was David impelled by the Spirit to go from Hebron to Mount Zion and the neighbouring Mount Moriah, where he should afterwards rear a tabernacle for the Ark of the Covenant, and where Jehovah, according to a special revelation made to him, would erect His holy temple 1 Chron. xxi. 17—30, and xxii. 1. Moreover, when he saw the cordiality with which the tribe of Benjamin, who along with Judah had a part in Jerusalem and Mount Zion, received him as their king, he could have no hesitation in fixing upon Mount Zion as his residence, the centre as it was of the whole land, and strongly fortified on all sides by nature, as the possession of it by the Jebusites for so long a period clearly proved.

Thus David went up with all his forces from Hebron to Jerusalem, and laid siege to Mount Zion. At first the Jebusites ridiculed the attempt, and declared that he would never be able to conquer their fortress. But no sooner had he publicly announced that whosoever should first mount the walls, and destroy the insulting Jebusite priests that stood on the rampart, would be chief captain of the forces, than Joab, who knew that David's heart was set against him since the death of Abner, at the hazard of his life ascended the wall and took possession of the fortress. Thus were the Jebusites expelled from the greatest stronghold of the land; and indeed it was then only that Israel obtained the full possession of Palestine. As soon as David had gained that great object, he made Mount Zion his residence, and called it "the city of David," fortified it still more strongly than it had been before, and began to fill that favourite mountain with most magnificent palaces, towers, and strongholds.

When Hiram, the king of Tyre, had heard what David had done, and of his settlement upon Mount Zion, he sent unto him messengers with his salutation, and at the same time architects, skilful workmen in wood and stone, and all needed materials which he could supply from Lebanon, to build him a royal palace for his residence. Tyre at that time was a very flourishing kingdom, and Hiram, the king, highly renowned for his wealth and grandeur.* David therefore considered the extraordinary kindness of that illustrious monarch as a sign that the Lord "had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake." 2 Sam. v. 12. The following Psalm was composed by him at the dedication of his royal palace.

* See Ezekiel's description of the royal house of Hiram and the land of Tyre, chapters xxvii. and xxviii.

PS. XXX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XLVIII.

A SONG OF PRAISE COMPOSED BY DAVID FOR THE DEDICATION OF HIS HOUSE.

1. I will extol thee, O Jehovah,
For thou hast put me within doors,*
And hast not suffered mine enemy to rejoice over me.
2. O Jehovah, my God, unto thee have I cried aloud,
And thou hast restored me.†
3. O Jehovah, thou hast withdrawn my soul from the grave;
Thou hast preserved me in life,
From him who would throw me into the pit.‡

The persecuted and exiled David, who for several years had to flee for his life, and to wander about in wild and desert places, and spend his nights in sorrow in the dens and caves of the earth, was now restored to his country, advanced to the throne of all Israel, and settled in the mighty fortress of Zion, the holy mountain of God. He had also received such tokens that the Lord had established him on his throne and exalted his

* This Psalm has been the subject of much discussion among commentators. Their chief difficulty has arisen from not being able to find any reference in the Psalm corresponding to the occasion of its composition as indicated in the title of it, namely, the dedication of David's house. But the question arises, Why did they not try to remove the difficulty by searching out the real meaning of some of those words which they have so entirely perverted? The word דִּלִּיתָנִי (Dilithani) they invariably render "thou hast exalted me," or "lifted me up"—a rendering no less false than it is ridiculous, for if the root be דָּלָה (Dalah), then they should have rendered it "thou hast cast me down." Such is the import of the word—"to let down," "to hang down," "to push down." Accordingly, when "Dalah" is applied to denote the act of "drawing water" from a well, it is not the "drawing up" that is denoted by it, but the "letting down" of the pitcher into the well, in order to reach the water. How then can the word in the text here denote to exalt? The fact is, that the verb in our verse is taken from the noun דֶּלֶת (Deleth), "a door," "a gate." Accordingly, it is customary among the Jews at the present day, when the Lord enables any one to build an house for himself, to say, "Thanks to God, he has set me now within doors," or, "Now I am within my own door;" and hence the import of the verb used by David in this Psalm, Dilithani, "thou hast put me within doors," or "thou hast made me dwell within doors," i.e. my own doors. This Psalm is used by the Jews, the people of my own nation, to this day at the dedication of their newly-built houses; and it is most appropriate, though in many particulars it refers to the history of David.

† Some conclude from the word וַתִּרְפְּאֵנִי (Vatirpaeni), which they render, "And thou hast healed me," that David must have written this Psalm after a recovery from a severe illness. For the same reason they should draw the inference from the expression אֶרְפֶּא מְשֻׁבָּתָם (Erpa Meshuvatham), "I will heal their backslidings," (Hos. xiv. 4), that Israel must have been in a severe illness at that time. But the passage in Hosea should read, "I will restore them from their backsliding." The word קָפַח (Kaphah), though meaning originally "to heal" or "to cure," has numerous metaphorical meanings. In the following passages it means "restore," i.e. after affliction. 2 Chron. vii. 14; Hos. vii. 1, xi. 3; Isa. xix. 22, lviii. 18, 19; Jer. xvii. 14. Sometimes it is even applied to the mending of some thing broken, "to repair," as 1 Kings xviii. 30; Jer. xix. 11. Some times also "to comfort," or "counsel." Job xiii. 4; Jer. vii. 11. Thus, in this Psalm, the word simply means, that the Lord restored David to quietness and happiness after long persecution and calamity.

‡ אֶרְדּוּ (Yarod) means, "to go down," then the מִיְּיָרְדּוֹ בֹר (Miyordō Bor) in this verse, evidently refers to the individual who would make David descend into the pit. This was Saul who tried often enough to send him into his grave, but in spite of all his wicked attempts, Jehovah has preserved him in life. (The Keri is here most correct, and supported by many MSS., and if critics had understood its import, they would not have rejected it.)

kingdom in the sight of his enemies, that the glorious and illustrious Hiram, the king of Tyre, had honoured him in building for him a magnificent palace. And if the Psalmist would express his thankfulness to God for fulfilling to him his promises, what words more suitable for such a purpose than those which he now employs on the occasion of the dedication of his palace? "I will extol thee, O Jehovah, for thou hast put me within doors," *i.e.* thou hast made me dwell in my own house, within my own doors; which is the import of the Hebrew text. And what more? "Thou hast not suffered mine enemy to rejoice over me, or triumph over me." He needed no more to flee from the javelin of Saul, or to resort to the cave of Adullam or Engedi, to pour out his heart there in bitter complaint and supplication. But as a mighty monarch, surrounded by thousands of valiant men of war, he entered his royal palace in glory and splendour. In verses 2 and 3, he remembers his former miseries, and the imminent danger to which he was often exposed, and ascribes his deliverance to the merciful Jehovah, who had heard his prayers and supplications, and saved him from death. He preserved him—restored him—exalted him, and put in his mouth a glorious song of praise.

4. O sing unto Jehovah all ye his saints,
And render thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.
5. For even in the moment of his anger,
There is life in his good pleasure :
The evening must pass in tears,
That song might come in the morning.

David in these two verses teaches the saints a most important lesson from his own experience. He had seen, after all, that "it was good for him to have been afflicted"—that all his former sufferings and trials had issued in double joy, and had brought with them lasting happiness; and that all the mysterious process he had had to go through—all the sufferings and terrors he had had to endure—all the dark moments of his life, when he thought that surely the Lord had been angry with him, and had forsaken him—all these combined together to promote as well his temporal as his spiritual welfare. This lesson he now teaches the saints, showing them that "all things work together for good to them that love God." "O sing unto Jehovah," he says, "all ye his saints, and render thanks at the remembrance of his holiness;" and then he goes on to give the reason, "For even in the moment of his anger," *i.e.* in the moment of our calamity and trial, when we think he is angry with us; even then "there is life in his good pleasure," his intention then is not to kill us, but to do us good—not to grieve us willingly, but to chasten us for our advantage. For "the evening must pass in tears,"—the evening of the saint, when he grows lazy, and would love to slumber and forget himself altogether, after having spent a peaceful and happy day—this evening "must pass in tears"—the Lord must bring calamities and trials upon him to keep him awake in prayer and supplication; and all this in order "that song might come in the morning"—that their spiritual life should be preserved—that the oil might not cease from their lamps, and that their spiritual joy in the Lord might continue to expand. David then goes on to describe his own experience, how he was in danger, in the days of his indifference, to rest contented, and think that all

things must ever pass on smoothly and happily—that prayer to God would have been neglected—that his harp of praise would have become silent, and his entire dependence upon God would have gradually decreased, unless the Lord had disquieted him in his dangerous position, raised up an enemy against him, plunged him into misery, and humbled him to the dust, in order to prepare him for the high exaltation to which he had now lifted him; and then he declares that he was now ready to praise the Lord all the days of his life.

6. Truly when in my false security,
I imagined that I shall never be moved :

The word **בְּשֵׁלְבִי** (Beshalvy) here is used in a bad sense, intended to designate that careless security into which man is apt to sink, by the forgetfulness induced by lengthened peace and tranquillity. In such a sense it is used Prov. i. 32; Ezek. xxiii. 42; Ps. lxxiii. 12. And here David acknowledges that peace and tranquillity had had such a deadening influence upon his spiritual condition, that he became quite self-sufficient, secure, and fearing nothing, and all the while building his castle of refuge upon the sand. But he proceeds to show that the merciful God had not left him in that dangerous condition, and by what means he rescued and awakened him.

7. O Jehovah, it was by thy favour
That thou hast raised up my formidable adversary,—
That thou hast hidden thy face, so that I was confounded.*
8. Then unto thee, O Jehovah, I cried,—
Unto thee, O Jehovah, I made supplications.
9. What profit will there be to thee in my blood,
When I should go down to corruption?
Shall the dust render thee thanks?
Shall it publish thy faithfulness?
10. Hear, O Jehovah, and be gracious unto me :
O Jehovah, become thou my Helper.

Such were the first-fruits of Jehovah's mysterious dealings with David. He was crushed to the dust—he was humbled—he was brought on his knees—he poured forth his soul in supplication and prayer unto the Lord,

* The word **לְהָרֵרִי** (Lehareri) in this verse, which is commonly rendered "my mountain," means "my adversary," "my persecutor," or "he that sought to do me mischief." The noun is formed from **רָע** (Ra), "bad," "evil," "mischief," from which comes the verb **רָעָה** (Harea), "to do evil;" Isa. i. 16; Ps. lxxiv. 3; the **ו** is dropped, because of the additional pronoun in **רִי** (Ri) "my" adversary. The meaning of the passage is, that the Lord "by his favour," or by his good pleasure (for the word "Birtzoncha" is the same as in verse 5, second clause), i.e. for a good purpose—for a gracious design, has raised up a formidable enemy to him to awaken him to a sense of his condition, and to drive him to prayer. Jehovah showed himself as if he had hidden his face from persecuted David, and the consequence was that he was confounded or sore dismayed. Now he proceeds to show the blessed results this lesson produced on his own mind, in awakening him to prayer and supplication—to praise and thanksgiving, and to the strengthening of his faith.

whom before he was ready to forget: moreover he submitted himself entirely unto the Lord, who alone could deliver him from all danger, and placed all his confidence in his free mercy. But this was not all; the more glorious results appeared when Jehovah answered his prayer and restored him.

11. Thou didst then turn for me my mourning into dancing :
Thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness ;
12. In order that glory might sing thy praise,
And never keep silence :
O Jehovah, my God, for ever will I render thee thanks.

In these verses we see how David was led through ways he knew not, and all for his spiritual welfare. If there be a soil in which saints will never thrive, it is when they enjoy a state of protracted peace and prosperity; in such a condition the young plant especially grows wild even unwittingly. But Jehovah comes forth and roots him out of it, and transplants him first into a desert place of trials and calamities, of temptations and troubles. Thus the first object of the divine dealings is gained—prayer and supplication are produced; and when Jehovah sees fit, he takes him out again, and plants him in a smiling and blissful region, that songs of thanksgiving and praise might be the better fruits of his produce. Such was David's experience, and this lesson he teaches the saints in this Psalm. Verse 12 personifies "glory" in contrast to "misery," the results of which he showed in verses 9 and 10 were prayer and supplication; so in verse 12 he shows, that "glory is the result of deliverance, of salvation, and of prosperity, and declares that Jehovah had saved him from his misery, the productions of which were supplication and prayer, in order that "glory" should produce its cheering songs of triumph and joy. What a wondrous illustration is this Psalm of the doctrine of the great Apostle: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" &c. Heb. xii. 6, 7.

According to the resolution contained in the close of the foregoing Psalm, David had engaged to render thanks unto Jehovah all the days of his life, for his great goodness toward him in rescuing him from all the dangers to which he had been exposed, establishing him on the throne of Israel, and settling him in a magnificent palace on Mount Zion. We shall now trace his conduct in fulfilling this resolution. The following Psalm seems to have a close relation to the foregoing, and contains some strict and holy resolutions which he formed for the regulation of his own conduct and that of his family and court; the example of justice and piety he would show unto that nation over which Jehovah had raised him to be king; the severe punishments he would inflict upon great and violent offenders, and the rewards of justice and virtue he would bestow upon those of his own attendants, officers, and domestics, whom he found deserving of them. These resolutions and regulations he dedicates in a song to the Lord, for whose sake he had formed them, and leaves it as a shining lamp—a bright pattern for saints in generations to come that they might follow his godly example.

PS. CI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XLIX.

A SONG, OR PSALM OF DAVID.

1. I will sing of benevolence and of justice—
To thee, O Jehovah, do I dedicate my song.
2. I shall behave myself wisely, in a perfect way ;
That at what time thou comest to me,
I may be found walking in perfectness of heart,
In the midst of my family.

The import of verse 2d is, that David would not wait till the righteous God should visit him, and put him upon the balance of his righteousness and find him wanting, and that then he should cry for pardon and mercy ; but that he would do all in his power to walk in a just, and humble, and perfect way, that when the Lord should come to visit him he might find him on the watch, with oil in his lamp, and, with an upright heart, walking in a perfect path, and giving an example of godliness and piety to all around him ; and thus Jehovah might testify of him, as he afterwards did, " If thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness," &c., 1 Kings ix. 4 ; and again, " For my servant David's sake whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes." 1 Kings xi. 34.

3. I shall place no wicked action before mine eyes ;
The deed of the transgressors I detest : It shall not cleave to me.
4. The perverted heart shall depart from me :
Whatsoever is evil, I shall not tolerate.
5. Whoso slandereth his neighbour in secret,
Him will I put to silence :*
Him who hath haughty eyes and an arrogant heart, I cannot endure.
6. Mine eyes shall be directed to the faithful of the land,
That they should dwell with me :
He who walketh in an upright way, he shall serve me.
7. He who practiseth deceit shall not dwell in my house :
He who talketh lies shall not be established before mine eyes.
8. Early in the morning will I put to silence all the wicked of the land,
To extirpate from the city of God all the workers of iniquity.

* The primary meaning of the verb *רָצַח* (Tzamath), is "to make silent," "to put to silence;" it is only therefore in a figurative sense that it is rendered "to cut off" or "destroy," i.e., to put to silence by death. Here, however, it cannot signify, to "cut off" the slanderer by death, for hateful, and wicked, and dangerous as the sin of the slanderer is, still David had no authority in the law to put a slanderer to death. It must therefore be understood here in its primary signification, and read, "Whoso slandereth his neighbour in secret, him will I put to silence," i.e. by severe punishment.

The expression, "early in the mornings," as here used, is designed to intimate the zeal and vigour with which the righteous king was resolved to execute his work ; he would not allow them to thrive or continue long in their wickedness, thereby infecting others, but would speedily put a stop to their malicious course. The same word occurs again in this place as in verse 5th, which in both places we have rendered by "put to silence." Though the objection mentioned above against the rendering of the word by "cut off," has not the same force here (see foot note on verse 5), because under the term רשע (Rasha) "wicked," even such criminals as deserved death according to the law might be included ; still to adopt this rendering here, the same idea occurring in the latter clause of the verse, would obviously involve a useless repetition. The expression in the first clause must therefore be understood to mean, that David would use strong and effectual measures to check the progress of wickedness—to put it to silence, and that this would issue in a perfect extinction or extirpation of the workers of iniquity in the city of God.

The increasing prosperity of David, and the rapidity with which the Israelitish nation acquired strength under their new monarch, even after the almost fatal blow they had sustained on Gilboa, excited the jealousy of proud Philistia, the ancient and deadly enemy of Israel. Ever since the death of Saul, it would seem they had regarded with indifference all the transactions and changes that took place in Palestine. Two reasons might be assigned for this ; first, the feeling of satisfaction it afforded them to see the kingdom of Israel divided under two kings, David and Ishbosheth. No sooner, however, was the kingdom re-united under David, than they began gradually to project schemes of war and opposition, all the while gathering their forces, in order to meet him with their whole strength. Second, although, as we have already seen, David had entered into league with Achish, the Philistine king, with whom he sojourned, yet now it would seem, either that another king reigned over Philistia, or, if it was the same king, that he had been moved by jealousy to break his league with David, when he beheld the rapid progress of his kingdom, his increasing prosperity, and the strong position he had taken up on Mount Zion. That the latter opinion is the more probable, namely, that Philistia violated their league with David, will appear from the following Psalm, which must have been composed after the two victories which he gained over them. Accordingly the time came, and truce-breaking Philistia arose in open hostility and declared war against Israel. "And all the Philistines came up to seek David." 2 Sam. v. 17. From this it appears that the preparations they made to meet the flourishing monarch of Israel were so great, that they came to seek him with all their forces. David, however, was not unprepared for an invasion, which he could not but foresee would soon come. Among the three hundred thousand warriors that came to Hebron to anoint him king over all Israel, there were mighty men of valour and of reputation, as officers and captains of the army. But besides these, there were among his attendants a goodly number of highly distinguished heroes, thirty of whom were mightier than lions,—men who had established their reputation by slaying their hundreds—by putting whole detachments of the enemy to flight, and routing them with great slaughter

—by overpowering wild beasts, and conquering in single combat the most gigantic warriors of Philistia, 2 Sam. xxiii. 8—39; all these were captains in David's well-trained and experienced army, which was abundantly provided with all the instruments of war, so that, in respect of military preparation, he was able to go forth to meet the enemy. But of far more avail than all this was his confidence in the aid of the Almighty Jehovah, the Lord who had given him already many and wonderful proofs of his assistance. David, as an experienced warrior, when he heard that the whole Philistian army was coming upon him, removed from Mount Zion to the stronghold of Adullam, preferring rather than to be besieged by so extraordinary an army, to be ready to meet them immediately and in open battle, that so the country might not be laid waste by them. While he and his army were in the regions of Adullam, the Philistines, with their numerous forces, invaded Judea, and spread their camps in the valley of Rephaim (or of the giants), on the north side, and in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem.*

David, who did nothing without asking counsel of the God of Israel, called for the High Priest with the Urim and Thumim; he then asked of the Lord, "Shall I go up to the Philistines? Wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? The answer he received was, Go up; for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand." 2 Sam. v. 19. Thus assured of victory, he marched up against the far more numerous host of the enemy, fell upon them with lion-like fury, attacked them on every side, especially toward Baal-Perazim, where the situation was also favourable for David and his army; and the Philistines, confounded between the mountains, were completely crushed before the Israelites, and the victory was decided. And David said, "Jehovah hath broken mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters," *i.e.* as the eruption of waters over the banks of an overswelling stream, which spread in every direction, and are at length wasted; even so was the mighty army of the Philistines broken and dispersed and slaughtered before him and his men. But the Philistines made a second attempt upon Israel.† Having gathered their forces anew, they pushed forward to the same place where they had before pitched their camps, and in the same valley near Jerusalem. David again asked direction of God by the Oracle, and the answer he received at this time was, that he should not attack them on the front as before, but march his army at some distance behind that of the enemy, and attack them on that part of the valley which was surrounded by some notable mulberry trees, "And let it be that when thou hearest the sound as it were of the rustling of steps in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the Lord go out before thee to smite the host of the Philistines. And David did so as the Lord had commanded him; and

* Josephus here remarks, "Let none suppose that it was a small army of the Philistines that came against the Hebrews . . . but let him know that all Syria and Phœnicia, with many other nations beside them, and those warlike nations, also came to their assistance, and had a share in this war."—Jos. Antiq., B. vii. chap. 4th.

† Josephus, in the above quoted chapter, speaks of this second attack of the Philistines as follows: "Indeed, when they had so often failed of their purposes in these battles, they came upon David with an army three times as numerous as before, and pitched their camp on the same spot of ground as before." From the very nature of the history we may learn that Philistia was not alone in these attempts, but was aided by many auxiliaries of other nations.

smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer." 2 Sam. v. 24, 25. His second victory over the Philistines was decisive and complete, their army was completely routed, and the victory carried by him even within their own territory. Thus he discomfited Israel's greatest and most dangerous enemy, and taught them a lesson to wage war no more. The composition of the following Psalm owes its origin to that period, and contains his thanksgivings unto the Lord for this double victory.

PS. CXLIV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. L.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

1. Blessed be Jehovah my Rock,
Who traineth my hands for war, my fingers for battle :
- 2 My Benefactor, my Stronghold, my High Fortress, and my
Deliverer ;
My Shield in whom I have taken shelter :
Who brought my nation to submission under me.

In this Psalm the last clause of verse 2, in which David expresses his thankfulness to God, who had brought the Israelitish nation to submit to him after the opposition which the eleven tribes had offered during seven years, has been made the subject of much speculation among commentators. Some have attempted to substitute the plural עַמִּים (Amim), "nations," instead of the singular עַמִּי (Ami), "my nation," as it stands at present. But there is not the least reason for such an alteration ; nor is there any impropriety in the word הָרַדְדָה (Haroded) being used by David regarding his nation, for the primary meaning of the word is "to make one submit himself," either willingly or by constraint. Nor are we under the necessity of understanding it in the latter sense here : we must understand it rather as descriptive of the wonderful manner in which Jehovah so arranged the events of his holy providence, as that the Israelitish nation willingly and cordially submitted themselves unto David, and proved their fidelity to him in both of the Philistine wars, fighting bravely for their prince.

3. O Jehovah, what is man that thou takest interest in him !—
The son of mortal man that thou regardest him ?
4. Man resembleth the breath—
His days are like a vanishing shade.
5. O Jehovah, bow thy heavens and descend :
Touch the mountains that they may smoke :
6. Send forth lightnings and scatter them—
Shoot forth thine arrows and confound them.
7. Stretch forth thine arrow from above,
Rescue me and deliver me from the mighty waters,
Even from the hand of the sons of the aliens ;
8. Whose mouth spake falsehood,
And whose right hand is a right hand of lies.

The enemy against whom, in the 6th verse, David begins to call forth the judgments of God, appears in verse 8 in his true character. It is Philistia, with her deceitful and truce-breaking children, from whom David prays in the above passage to be delivered; while he invokes judgment upon them for their base and wicked conduct toward him. He had done them no harm—he had given them no offence, but they broke their promise—the league formed between them and him for the preservation of freedom, and attempted to crush him out of mere jealousy, because God had prospered him. The expression of verse 8, “a right hand of lies,” refers to a custom in those days—and which is observed among the Hebrews to this day—according to which, the parties entering into a league gave to each other the right hand as a pledge of their sincerity; but the right hand of the Philistines proved to be false, “a right hand of lies,” on which no dependence could be placed.

9. A new song will I sing to thee, O God ;
On a ten-stringed instrument will I sing thee praise.
10. O Thou who givest salvation to kings ;
Who hast rescued thy servant David from a dangerous sword ;
11. Rescue me, and deliver me from the hands of the sons of the aliens,
Whose mouth spake falsehood,
And whose right hand is a right hand of lies.

There is again an alteration suggested by different commentators in verse 10, in which they find fault with the plural מְלָכִים (Melachim), “kings,” and wish to substitute instead of it the singular, מַלְכִי (Malko), “his king.” This, however, we cannot perceive to be an improvement, and think that it would deprive the verse of its sublimity. Besides, there is no authority for it. Why should not David speak in general of the salvation, a victory of kings which comes alone from God? In the first clause of the verse he calls upon Jehovah, who alone gives victory to kings in general, and then he specializes it in the second clause, declaring that it is the same God who had granted to him in particular his almighty protection; and this same God he entreats to continue his goodness toward him, to protect and rescue him from all the plots of the wicked Philistines which they might still devise against him. The two compound verbs in verse 10, הִנֹּחֵן (Hanotzen) and הִפּוֹצֵחַ (Hapotzeh)* are not to be rendered in the third person, but in the second, as may be seen from their connection with verse 11, which begins in the second person. David then goes on to describe the result of his late victories, and the prosperity of the nation, under the protection and blessing of the God of Israel.

* There is a peculiarity in such expressions in the Hebrew which can scarcely be translated, and which to explain fully would require a treatise of itself and many illustrations, for which this is not the proper place. Even the ך suffixed to the noun עֲבָדִי (Avdo) is to be taken in the second person, “thy servant,” and not “his servant,” as the ך is put instead of ך, to keep up the uniformity with the above compounds of pronouns and verbs.

12. Behold our sons are like unto plants,
Vigorously shooting up in their youth :
Our daughters are like the carved corner columns
In the structure of a palace.
13. Our garners are full, replete from store to store :
Our sheep are in thousands and tens of thousands in our fields.*
14. Our oxen are strong for labour :
There is no outbreak, nor tumult, nor wailing in our streets.
15. Happy is the nation whose condition is such :
Happy is the nation whose God is Jehovah.

While the glorious and pious king of Israel enumerates in this passage the happy effects of peace and prosperity, as these were to be seen in the thriving and blooming appearance of the nation and all that belonged to them, he at last returns to the source of all these temporal mercies. Happy, indeed, is the nation whose condition is such—who are thus flourishing. But whence comes all this? The answer is, "Happy is the nation whose God is Jehovah." Here is the source of their happiness.

THE TRANSPORTATION OF THE ARK AND CHERUBIM TO ZION.

After the two great victories which David had obtained over the Philistines, the fiercest and most formidable enemies with whom he had to contend, he might naturally calculate upon a considerable period of peace and tranquillity. At the same time, when he considered the faithfulness of Jehovah, and the extraordinary manner in which he had fulfilled his first promises to him, he began most devoutly to make arrangements for paying unto Him, his faithful Friend, the solemn vows he had taken upon himself in times of trouble. His first step was to re-establish the Levitical order, the sacrifices and oblations, as the holy types of a coming Saviour, which ceased to be exhibited under Saul's ungodly dominion—to arrange again the tabernacle services—to put glorious songs of praise into the mouths, and stringed instruments into the hands of the sons of Levi, that they might produce sweet and soul-cheering melodies to accompany the praises of the great God of Israel. Zion was now established as the metropoli of Palestine; the royal palace of David was completed in all its beauty and splendour; and what could be more desirable for him than to render Zion, yet to be the residence of the great God of Jacob in his representative, the Cherubim of glory and the Shechinah between them? To make his residence the centre not only of civil but also of ecclesiastical scenes—to have the tabernacle order, the priestly and Levitical arrangements—the regulation also of the Sabbaths and feasts, of sacrifices and oblations, and of all manner of solemnities, combined with the tabernacle services, under his own inspection, yea to dwell in Jehovah's house all the days of his life—this was now the object of David's chief desire, and to accomplish it he now sets himself without delay. Thus he prepared in one part of his palace, or near to it, a tabernacle or sacred tent, wherein to place the holy

* That חֲצִיזִית (Chutzith) means also "fields," or even "pastures," see Job v. 10; Prov. viii. 26, &c.

Ark of the Covenant which he was about to bring up from the place of its obscurity in the house of Abinadab in Gibeah near Kirjath-jearim, on the confines of Judah and Benjamin. As soon as the necessary preparations were made, David summoned the princes and generals, the captains and officers, the elders and rulers of Israel, thirty thousand in number, and laid his plan before them, wishing to know if they approved of it, and if they agreed, then to take an active share in the solemnities that were about to be observed in their country; and having secured their approbation and the promise of their assistance, he sent messengers throughout all the land inviting all the men of Israel to be present on the occasion. And when the multitudes of the covenanted people of God assembled, David went with them to Gibeah or to Baale of Judah, which was Kirjath-jearim, to bring up the Ark to Mount Zion into the place prepared for it. But David was discouraged at the time by the sudden death of Uzzah, son of Abinadab, who, when the Ark, which was carried on a new waggon, shook by the slipping of the oxen, laid hold on it contrary to the strict commandment of Jehovah.* Ter-

* From 1 Chronicles xv. it appears that David had not called upon the priests and Levites to sanctify themselves for the bringing up of the Ark from Gibeah to Zion, but left it to Abinadab and his children, who, being Levites themselves, and having the Ark with them all the time from the early days of Samuel, he might have thought were the best fitted for such a service. When the men of Kirjath-jearim took the Ark from Bethshemesh and placed it in the house of Abinadab in Gibeah, in the immediate neighbourhood of Kirjath-jearim (see 1 Sam. vi. 19-20), they sanctified Eleazar, the eldest son of Abinadab, to have the charge of the Ark of God—to go about it—to keep the place in order, with the veil before it, and make every other arrangement which the place needed from time to time. 1 Sam. vii. 1. In the transportation of the Ark we find no mention made of Eleazar, nor of Abinadab, his father. Though the house was still called by his name, the probability is that both the father and son were now dead; and therefore we read that when David took the Ark from Abinadab's house, "Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart." 2 Sam. vi. 3.

The error into which David and the elders of Israel fell at this time, in allowing the Ark to be carried on a waggon, while the law required that it should be borne on the shoulders of the Levites (Num. iv.), might have arisen from the fact that when the Ark came from Philistia to Bethshemesh, it was carried upon a cart drawn by "kine oxen." 1 Sam. vi. 14. This, however, was an extraordinary circumstance, and was not entitled to be regarded as a rule on other occasions. What the Lord might have allowed once to happen, David and the elders of Israel were not to be justified in doing now; for if it pleased him to allow the Philistines to carry the holy Ark and the Cherubim of glory into captivity, and then smite them sore and force them to return it, so he might allow them, as they were ignorant of the law, and had none of the Levites to instruct them, to place it on a cart. But on the part of David and the elders of Israel it was a great neglect.

Moreover, in the above-quoted chapter (Num. iv.), explicit instructions were given as to the manner in which the Ark was to be carried from place to place. In such a case the officiating priest was to cover it first with the veil which separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy, and then spread over it again a covering of badgers' skins, and put in the staves into the rings which the Ark had on each side, and by these the Levites were to carry it, but were on no account to touch it on pain of death. Num. iv. 5, 6, 15. Now there can be no doubt that during the time the Ark abode in Gibeah it was covered with the veil and the covering of badgers' skin, and had the staves in the rings ready for transportation; for it was only when the Ark was erected in the Most Holy Place that these were allowed to be removed, but not when laid up in a temporary place and without its tabernacle. Accordingly, when the Ark was removed from Abinadab's house, Uzzah and Ahio only required to lift it by the staves and put it carefully on the cart without touching it. And to stretch forth his hand and lay hold on it, as Uzzah rashly did in the sight of all Israel, was on his part a daring violation of the law of that God whose presence it represented. Jehovah accordingly punished this daring act in the most awful manner. He is a jealous God, and he was sanctified in Uzzah's sudden death in the sight of all Israel. Lev. x. 3. The effect was immediately seen upon David, who was "grieved" at the sudden breach which the Lord made upon Uzzah, "עַד הַחֹשֶׁל" (Al Hashal), "for the error!" and David was afraid of the Lord on that day, and said, "How shall the Ark of the Lord come to me?" 2 Sam. vi. 9. The warning made a deep impression, and was greatly blessed in the future both to David and all Israel, who were made to know that even *their* God is a consuming fire.

rified by that extraordinary occurrence, David allowed the Ark of God to be placed for a time in the house of Obed-Edom, who was a Levite, and did not bring it to Jerusalem, fearing the Divine displeasure.

But in searching more carefully into the matter, David found out, that while Uzzah had grievously violated the commandment of God in rashly laying hold of the Ark, he himself was not free of blame in this matter, inasmuch as both he and the elders of Israel who were with him had forgotten that, according to the law, the Ark should have been borne on the shoulders of the Levites, and not carried on a cart. Besides, David was soon made acquainted with the fact that the Lord had blessed exceedingly the house of Obed-Edom and all that belonged to him, because of the Ark. Accordingly, having such indications of the Divine favour, he, at the end of three months, gathered again all Israel unto Jerusalem, and among them the priests and Levites. The king then said unto Zadok and Abiathar, the High Priests, and to the chiefs of the Levites, "Ye are the chiefs of the fathers of the Levites (*i.e.*, of the tribe of Levi, including the priests); sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the Ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order." 1 Chron. xv. 13, 14. According to the king's command, the priests and Levites sanctified themselves, and were prepared for the sacred and glorious processions about to take place. The number of the Levites present was 862, under six princes, according to 1 Chron. xv. 5—10; and as they were all skilful in sacred music, David provided them with all manner of musical instruments, psalteries, harps, and cymbals. These were divided under the three leaders or head musicians, Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun. When all of them were present, Heman was the first, Asaph the second, and Jeduthun the third; each of these had a small band of vocal singers under him, while the instrumental musicians formed other bands under their twelve leaders, so that every chief musician had his own vocal band, and four of the instrumental bands, as his assistants.* These three head musicians and their own three bands were the vocal singers, but they had also loud instruments in their bands, with which, when they came to a pause, they helped their other brethren to lift up the tune. The priests also were provided with trumpets to blow them before the Ark of the Lord. With such a magnificent procession, and with every possible demonstration of the highest joy, was the Ark of the Covenant, "whose name was called by the name of the Lord of Hosts, who dwelleth between the Cherubim," brought into the royal city. The sweet singer of Israel was exalted in Jehovah, and his soul leaped within him for inexpressible gladness and holy triumph. He danced for joy, and played his harp before the Ark of the Lord, his God and his Saviour.

The 95th Psalm, in the common order, seems to have been the opening Psalm of that extraordinary day. It belongs properly to the five succeeding Psalms in the common order, which form one strain of praises, and ap-

* The fifteen bands were afterwards divided into twenty-four wards, so that Heman, besides his own band of vocal musicians, had seven bands of instrumental musicians under him. Asaph had the same, and Jeduthun also. See a more exact account of this arrangement in the introduction to Ps. lxxvii. chronologically Ps. xviij., page 117.

pear to have been all composed about that time; for the next Psalm, the xvi., along with others, was given out by David to Asaph when the Ark was already settled on Zion in its appointed place, 1 Chron. xvi.: the four following Psalms, xvii.—c., which belong to the same order, were evidently given out at the same time for daily use before the Ark.* But the xcv. contains internal evidence of its having been the opening hymn of that solemn day, and of having been given out by David as well fitted to improve that day's proceedings. While calling upon the multitudes of Israel to praise God, it conveys to them at the same time the most important instruction, reminding them of their need of repentance after the years of indifference and forgetfulness which they had spent under the reign of Saul. On this occasion David took the lead in the solemn procession, with the harp in his hand; and when the Ark of God was taken out of the house of Obed-Edom, and as the Levites who carried it began to move, at the head of all the musicians he went before the Ark, opened with the following Psalm, and was followed by the head musicians with their bands.

PS. XCV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LI.

1. O come, let us sing unto Jehovah;
Let us shout with joy to the Rock of our salvation.
2. Let us haste to meet his presence with thanksgiving;
With songs of praise let us shout aloud to him.
3. For Jehovah is a great God,
And a great King over all is God:
4. In whose hand are the hidden treasures of the earth—
Unto whom the splendour of mountains belongeth:
5. Whose also is the sea, for he made it,
And the dry land which his hands have formed.

Such was the glorious invitation which David addressed unto long slumbering Israel. Under the bloody reign of Saul, no such sounds were heard, but shrieks of lamentation and woe from the oppressed, slaughtered, and crushed nation. But now the kingdom of Judah was established, from whose royal house the great Shiloh, the Prince of Peace, was to come. As the father of that great Immanuel, the devoted David, at the head of the rejoicing multitudes of the covenanted people of God, takes the first opportunity of improving the extraordinary solemnities of that memorable day, when the Ark was brought to the mountain of God, by inviting Israel to renew their covenant with God, "O come, let us sing unto Jehovah For Jehovah is a great God," &c. The multitudes were excited to the

* These six Psalms possess a surpassing beauty; they are full of angelic strains of adoration and praise, as we shall see when we come to the other five Psalms. Inasmuch as David's kingdom began only to be glorious when his residence was also made the residence of the living God, the God of Israel, and because of the connection of his kingdom with that of the Messiah his son, so the bringing of the Ark to Zion by him was an expressive type of the coming of the Messiah into the world, and the celestial strains of praises contained in the above Psalms, are styled by the apostle Paul the "Introduction of the First-born into the world." They are indeed fraught with Messianic prophecies.

very climax of joy, and when the flame of devotion had lighted up within their souls, the hundreds of musicians, along with the whole congregation of Israel, responded to the king's invitation, exclaiming loudly:

6. O come, let us worship, and fall down prostrate,
Let us bow our knees before Jehovah our Creator:
7. For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture,
And the sheep of his hand:

At this point the whole multitude, along with the musicians among the Levites, and all the priests, fell down to worship in profound silence before the Ark of the Covenant, as indicated in verse 6, while the High Priest standing before the Ark exclaimed with a loud voice,

To day if ye will listen to his voice.

Such appears to us to have been the arrangement of this Psalm, and such are its order and import. In this respect it was fitted to melt the hearts of the hundreds of thousands of the assembled Israelites. At the very height of their devotional feelings, awakened and sustained also by the sweet and melodious accents of their pious king—when, by an irresistible impulse, they all at once responded to the invitation, “O come, let us worship . . . Let us bow our knees before Jehovah, our Creator, for he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture,” and when, according to their resolution in verse 6, they all knelt down and lay prostrate in silent devotion before the Lord their God—before the Ark with the Cherubim and the Shekinah, the symbol of his glorious presence; then the High Priest called aloud to them, saying, “To day if ye will hear his voice”—to-day you can show that you really are what you profess to be, the people of Jehovah's pasture, and that he is what you claim him to be, your God—to-day, and in the midst of this holy solemnity, you are called to renew your covenant with that God whom you call your God—to-day, you are to remember that it is not enough to be the children of the Patriarchs to whom the promises were first given, and of those with whom the Lord entered into covenant at Mount Sinai, but that you are responsible for your own souls; and if you wish to procure peace in time and peace in eternity, to-day you have an opportunity on this solemn occasion to procure Jehovah's love for you, that he should be your God and Benefactor, and that ye should be the people of his pasture. And by what means is all this to be procured—“If ye will listen to his voice,” *i.e.* I have an oracular message for you from the Most High, and if to-day ye listen to his voice, I shall address it to you in his name. The High Priest then proceeds to deliver his message from Jehovah unto the worshipping Israelites.

8. Harden not your heart as in the contention,
As in the day of temptation in the wilderness:
9. When your fathers tempted me,
When they proved me, although they saw my operations.
10. Forty years was I provoked by that generation;

- Then I perceived that they are a people of a straying heart,
 And that they have not regarded my ways,
 11. Wherefore I swear in my wrath,
 That they should not enter into my rest.

This was a timely though severe message; still it could not but be acceptable unto Israel in these peculiar circumstances. Here they are taught that the covenant will prove to them of no avail, unless they render themselves by their obedience worthy recipients of its promised blessings. As an example and a warning to them, they are called to look back to their fathers in the wilderness, who personally entered into covenant with God, and witnessed all his wonders and signs, till they forfeited their privileges by their provocations, their sins and their iniquities, so that the righteous Jehovah swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest. And if it be asked, How all this was applicable to Israel in the days of David, seeing they were already settled in the land of promise, and God had given them rest under David's dominion?—the apostle Paul answers in the 4th chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, where he shows that the rest spoken of in this Psalm, refers not only to temporal rest in Palestine, but to the "rest which remaineth for the people of God," in a better land than Palestine—in a land afar off, where the true Israelites are not troubled by the Philistines of this world, but rest for ever in happiness and peace in the mansions prepared for them in their Father's house in heaven.

When the great Prince of Peace came into the world, and entered on his work as a preacher of righteousness, he adopted the same plan as David his father and type did on the occasion referred to in this Psalm. When the multitudes were gathered about him, he sought to impress upon their minds the great fact, that "they are not all Israel who are of Israel"—that the covenanted Israelite, though a child of Abraham, may yet perish in his sins, and his soul be exposed to everlasting punishment, as sore as that of any heathen, and even worse. He then invited them to come to him as the only door through which they could enter into life—the only name given under heaven by which men can be saved—the only Giver of Rest.

What other Psalms might have been used on that occasion till they came from the house of Obed-Edom to Mount Zion—especially as the Levites who carried the Ark halted after every six steps, when sacrifices were offered (2 Sam. vi. 13), which must have been accompanied with praise and thanksgiving—we cannot exactly ascertain. But one thing is, we think, certain, that when the whole happy and God-praising assembly came to the foot of Mount Zion, they must have stopped for the purpose of offering sacrifices and praising God. Then the xxiv. Psalm must have been employed, in different parts according to its contents, at the foot of Mount Zion, on ascending the mountain, and along all the while, until the Ark was placed in the tent prepared for it. Majestic and glorious, magnificent and highly elevated as this Psalm is in its poetry, and in its strains of adoration and praise of the great King of Glory, still it contains a most important lesson to Israel, as did the preceding one.

Psalm xxiv. is divided into two parts by one *Selah* in the middle, and it ends with another, as was the case with those Psalms which only opened

the worship, and were followed by another Psalm to render it complete. Several parties were employed in the performance of this seraphic ode, who will be introduced in their proper places; but the sweet Psalmist of Israel was himself the leader in it, and he opened it on his harp, seconded by all the musical Levites.

PS. XXIV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LII.

“A SONG OF PRAISE BY DAVID.”

At the foot of Mount Zion, where the Ark rested for a while until the proper sacrifices were offered, and before it began again to move on up the mount towards its future residence on Zion, seconded by all the bands of vocal and instrumental musicians alternately—David opened the Psalm.

DAVID ALONE.

1. Unto Jehovah belongeth the earth, and the fulness thereof—
The world, and they that dwell therein.

CHORUS' REPLY.

2. For he hath founded it above the seas,
And above the floods he hath established it.*

DAVID.

3. Who shall ascend the mountain of Jehovah?
And who shall stand in his holy place?

CHORUS' REPLY.

4. He who hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
He who hath not lifted up his soul to vanity,
And hath not sworn deceitfully:

[The High Priest turning his face towards the multitude, and all the priests along with him, and, lifting up their hands, pronounce the following blessing.]

5. Such shall obtain a blessing from Jehovah,
And deliverance from the God of his salvation.†

[The whole chorus of the Levites turning towards the multitude, and lifting their eyes towards heaven, exclaim,]

* Both the words *לְעֵלָּה* (Al) in the two clauses of this verse mean either “above,” as we have rendered it, and refer to Gen. i. 9, 10, denoting that Jehovah hath called forth dry land from the midst of the seas, and established it above the floods, and hath set a boundary to the latter never to turn and overflow it (see Job. xxxviii. 8; Psalm civ. chronologically Psalm vii. 9); or “by, or at,” as they often denote, and refer to the same subject of the omnipotence of God in relation to the same quoted passages, i.e. that though our globe is situated at or by the floods—is surrounded with mighty waters whose single wave could bury it for ever, still the Lord has so established it that this never can happen. This is a mighty reason why the earth and all its fulness and inhabitants belong to Jehovah.

† About the word *יִשְׁלָח* (Tzedakah), rendered here “deliverance,” the reader will find satisfaction in a foot note on Psalm lxx., in this book lx. 5.

6. This is the descended generation of Jacob,
 Who pay reverence unto Him,—
 Who seek Thy face, Selah, continually.

Here we have a second most important and impressive lesson for Israel which the devoted David endeavoured to engrave upon their hearts on that auspicious occasion. While the solemnity increased as they approached Mount Zion and the holy tent where the Representative of the God of Jacob was to be resident—while the ten thousands of rejoicing Israelites were exulting in Jehovah's praise—while the whole multitude were about to ascend the holy mountain of God, all equally rejoicing and delighting (to outward appearance) in His praise, as if they were all the faithful servants and devoted children of the Holy One of Israel;—then it was that the pious monarch put a stop to progress, and told them that though he, as a man, could not judge of their hearts, and therefore that they were all cheerfully admitted to ascend the visible mount of God, yet that there was a spiritual Mount Zion which no one could ascend unless he were of clean hands and of a pure heart. Such must be acknowledged to be David's meaning in the 3d verse, when he asks, "Who shall ascend the mountain of Jehovah? And who shall stand, or abide, in his holy place?" This cannot refer to the literal and visible Mount Zion, for all Israel, good or bad, who were present, were ready to ascend it, and did ascend it at last. But his meaning obviously is, that there is a God who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins of man, and as sure as he is Jehovah-Zebaoth, before whom the angels tremble, so sure is it that there is only a certain class of Israelites to whom will be granted the blessed privilege of ascending the heavenly Zion of his holiness, and of abiding in his presence throughout eternity; while those who are not possessed of the qualifications enumerated in verse 4th, shall be cast down into an abyss of utter darkness, although they be the descendants of Abraham; because they followed not his example of faith and holiness. When the chorus recited the necessary qualifications for ascending the spiritual Mount Zion, the High Priest must have announced the blessing contained in verse 5, saying, that such as are of clean hands and of a pure heart, &c., "Shall obtain a blessing from Jehovah, and deliverance from the God of his salvation." But as to outward appearance, and as far as man could judge, the whole multitude seemed to be ready to renew their covenant with God, to live according to the rules prescribed in verse 4, in order to obtain the blessing from Jehovah—the Levitical chorus turned towards the nation, saying, "This is the descended generation of Jacob,"* *i.e.*, this is a generation of the covenanted Patriarch—they have every advantage and opportunity, and every right to the blessing of Jehovah if they would make themselves worthy of it by their walk and conduct. In the next clause he proceeds to show, that this covenanted generation appear now in the attitude of those "who pay reverence unto Him," or "who anxiously enquire for Him," *i.e.* for the God of their salvation, in order to obtain the blessing of verse 4.

* Ignorance of the poetical style and arrangement of verse 6th has caused much needless and fruitless labour to commentators, especially as they could not make out to what connection the word "Jacob" belongs, which appears in the Hebrew text at the end of the verse, and before Selah. But we trust that we have put it in its proper place and poetical position.

In the last clause he addresses himself to God, showing that this covenanted generation of Jacob, who are now searching and enquiring after, and paying reverence to their God, were resolved to seek his face, *Selah*, continually, or always; *i.e.* that Israel were ready to enter into a renewal of the covenant, and to resolve to serve, love, and obey their God always, and that therefore they were entitled to the blessing pronounced by the priests, as in verse 5.

Such we consider to have been the arrangement and import of the first part of this Psalm, and that it was performed at the foot of Mount Zion. The Ark then began again to move up the mount before the rejoicing and exulting hosts: "Thus all Israel brought up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps." 1 Chron. xv. 28. When the Ark reached the door of the tent, its future residence, the whole procession stood still for a while, and the vocal chorus began the following verse:

VOCAL CHORUS.

FIRST DIVISION—HEMAN AND HIS BAND.

7. Lift up your heads, O ye gates !
And be lifted up, ye everlasting doors !
That the King of Glory may come in.

DAVID.

8. Who is this King of Glory ?

THE WHOLE CHORUS OF LEVITES.

Jehovah strong and mighty,
Jehovah mighty in battle.

The holy symbols of Jehovah's presence came close to the doors of the sanctuary built with hands. The sweet Psalmist of Israel contemplates with overwhelming joy the ineffable mercy and condescending love of the Lord most high. For many years the Ark and Cherubim remained in comparative obscurity, but now a new era commenced. The Lord began to fulfil his gracious promises made to David—establishing him on the throne of Israel—protecting him from the attacks of the Philistines, and making them like chaff before the wind before him and his triumphant army—building for him a magnificent palace on Mount Zion, with the taking of which and its castle the conquest of Palestine was completed—and now his residence was to become the abode of the symbol of the presence of the Almighty God. The holy Ark was now at the gates of the tent, and David instructed the Levites, the servants of Jehovah's sanctuary and the attendants of his presence in the holy symbols, to command the gates thereof, which, as if they were too low for the admission of so great and glorious a Personage, to lift up their heads, that the King of Glory might come in. He styles the gates "everlasting;" but from the very repetition of these words, as well as from several other expressions, we must see that he contemplated the glorious solemnity of that day as typical of the triumphant ascension of Jesus the Prince of Glory from the Mount of Olives into heaven, leading captivity captive, whom holy angels and seraphim, instead of mortal Levites, accompanied with their celestial choirs, commanding the everlasting

gates of heaven to open wide for the reception of the great Captain of life. Hence in the repetitions in these verses the attentive reader will discover type and antitype, temporal gates and everlasting gates, gates made with hands and gates of heaven.* The question in verse 8, repeated in verse 10, "Who is this King of Glory?" was wonderfully pertinent for Israel, whether they were acquainted with the real character of that God whom the Shechinah dwelling between the Cherubim represented. The answer was, that he was the omnipotent Jehovah, who revealed his great power to them, as to their fathers, by wonders and miracles, subduing mighty nations under them, and exalting them as his covenant people—"Jehovah strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in battle." But this was not all; the question and answer were repeated, and God appears as Jehovah-Zebaoth, the Lord of the hosts of heaven.

HEMAN AND HIS BAND AGAIN.

9. Lift up your heads, O ye gates !
And be lifted up, ye everlasting doors !
That the King of Glory may enter in.

DAVID.

10. Who is this King of Glory ?

FULL CHORUS AND ALL ISRAEL WITH SHOUTS.

Jehovah, Lord of Hosts,
He is the King of Glory, Selah, forever.

At the last Selah the singers ceased, but the tune was highly elevated, and the loud instruments were exercised to the greatest degree; the priests blew the trumpets, and the multitude danced, and shouted, and praised, and worshipped, and rejoiced, following the example of David, who was filled with holy celestial devotion and joy, and who felt that he was not his own but Jehovah's, a whole burnt-offering on that day of his chiefest delight. Thus the King of Glory entered the place of his rest, and soon thereafter, the shouts, and the trumpets, and the loud cymbals of the vocal bands (which were used at the Selah) were hushed, the multitude composed themselves to silence, and the following Psalm was begun :

PS. XLVII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LIII.

"Lamnatzeach," "To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A SONG OF PRAISE PRESENTED BY THE SONS OF KORAH.

PART FIRST.

1. O clap your hands, all ye people ;
Shout unto God with a triumphant voice :

* Dr Hengstenberg's idea that the "everlasting gates" must refer to the gates of the wall around Zion is absurd; for the gates of the wall could no more be styled "everlasting" than could the gates of David's tent built for the Ark. But he would have rid himself of the difficulty, had he believed that the writer of this Psalm and of the lxviii., knew something of the future triumphant ascension of Jesus through the gates of heaven to glory.

2. For Jehovah the Most High, the Terrible,
Is an exalted King over all the earth.
3. He shall subdue nations under us,
And put mighty people under our feet.
4. He hath chosen for us our inheritance,
Even the ornament of Jacob, which he loveth, Selah, always.*

In the above part of this sublime hymn, David calls upon the tribes of Israel to rejoice in Jehovah, who had subdued the Jebusites under them, and given them the holy mountain of Zion; who had crushed the Philistines under their feet, and given them rest; and above all, who was now residing on Zion in the midst of his people, and would subdue all their enemies, if they proved themselves worthy of his aid. But although the primary reference of the word עֲמִים (Amim) be to the twelve tribes of Israel, that they should clap their hands and make a joyful sound in praising the Lord, yet there can be no doubt from what we have already seen, that David perceived that all that had happened on that solemn day was but the dawn of Zion's glory; and though its typical glory would continue for a time under Israel exclusively, yet another and a more glorious time was to come, when "the beam shining from Zion hill would enlighten every land," and when from thence a new covenant law was to go forth to instruct and enlighten all nations. Hence we consider the call in the first

* Justice can scarcely be done to the Hebrew expression גֵּאוֹן יַעֲקֹב (Geon Yankov), which we have rendered "the ornament of Jacob," and which in the common version the "excellency of Jacob." גֵּאוֹן (Gaon) literally denotes "elevation," something gloriously elevating itself, as the swelling of a stream; גֵּאוֹן הַיַּרְדֵּן (Geon Hayarden), "the proud elevation of Jordan," when its waters swell over the banks. (Jerem. xii. 5, xlix. 19, l. 44; Zech. xi. 3.) It is also applied to the elevation of columns of smoke גֵּאוֹן עֲשָׁן (Geuth Ashan), the "elevation, or columns of smoke." From this it is easily understood how fit the word is to be used figuratively in a good sense for excellency, majesty, ornament, splendour, &c.; as also in a bad sense for haughtiness, pride, arrogance, &c. (See Exod. xv. 7; Isa. ii. 10, iv. 2, ix. 9, xiii. 3, xxiv. 14, xxv. 11, lx. 15; Micah v. 4; Psal. xxxi. 23, lxxiii. 6; Prov. xiv. 3, xvi. 18, and numerous other places where different figures are assumed by it.) In our passage it denotes that splendid elevation, the Mount Zion, which was the ornament of Jacob's inheritance, and which was ever beloved of God: "This place have I chosen to dwell therein." It was even beloved from the time of Abraham, who was to offer Isaac on Moriah, its adjacent mountain, and was always included under Zion, as we see from the above quoted passage. That Geon Yankov in our Psalm refers to the newly conquered Mount Zion, we may learn, first, from David's expression in the first clause of the verse, "He hath chosen for us our inheritance," which, when compared with Exodus xv. 17, "Thou shalt bring them in and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in; in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thine hands have established"—shows clearly that it refers to nothing else than Mount Zion. But secondly, when because of the sins of Israel the Lord determined the destruction of the temple. He said by Amos (vi. 8), "I abhor (Geon Yankov) the excellency (ornament) of Jacob;" and that this refers to Zion, read farther, "and hate his palaces; therefore will I deliver up the city, and all that is therein. (For the word "palaces" in this verse, compare Psalm xlviii. 3.) Thus we see that it was the newly conquered Zion in which David gloried. It was always the favoured spot of Palestine; and though the exact spot where the temple was to be built was not known till near the close of his life, yet it seems evident from many passages that he knew it would be somewhere about Mount Zion.

Dr Hengstenberg's idea, that this Psalm was written in the days of Jehoshaphat, shows above all, his ignorance of David's poetry; and the arguments he brings forward to establish the error are too weak to deserve notice.

verse in a general sense, as extending to all nations and families of the earth, to rejoice in the fact that the King of Glory had now established his throne in Zion, and that the reign of Messiah the Saviour of the world had begun in that of David. In the 4th verse David says, "He hath chosen for us our inheritance, even the ornament of Jacob which he loveth, Selah, always." As long as the Jebusites were in possession of the holy mountain, Canaan was not conquered; the most delightful spot—the ornament of Jacob—the glory of the whole land—the place of Jehovah's residence—was in the hand and power of the enemy. But now the kingdom of Shiloh had begun, Judah had the dominion, Zion was the metropolis of Judah's kingdom, and Jehovah had adopted it as His rest. What abundant reason that not Israel only, but all nations, should be invited to praise God and rejoice! (See foot-note on verse 4.)

In the second part of this Psalm the grand ascension of the Ark is described; and there can be no doubt that the ascension of the Antitype in glorious majesty was David's anticipation in it, and therefore he again invites Israel to praise and adore.

PART SECOND.

5. God ascended with shouting sounds—
Jehovah with the noise of trumpets.
6. O sing praise unto God, sing praise—
Sing praise unto our King, sing praise:—
7. For God is King of the whole earth;
O sing ye the choicest of praises.
8. God reigneth over the heathen:
God sat down upon the throne of His holiness.
9. The princes of the tribes assembled together,
Along with the nation of the God of Abraham:
For the guards of the land belong to Jehovah—
O how exceedingly is He exalted!

In the last verse, reference is made to the great assembly of Israel which was that day convened on Mount Zion—the princes and elders, the captains and officers, and the multitude of common people of the nation of the God of Abraham,—and how free were they from fear of invasion of their land by any enemy during their absence! Hence David says, "For unto God do belong מְגִינֵי-אֶרֶץ (Maginey Eretz), the guardianships, or the protections of the land," i.e. the Lord had promised, that on the solemn occasions of Israel's going up to Zion to worship Him there, He would protect the land from invasion. Exod. xxxiv. 24.

Of such magnificence are those celestial oracles which were composed by the inspired Psalmist on the occasion of the removal of the Ark to Mount Zion! Human language is inadequate to describe the lofty strains of adoration and praise which they breathe. David's rejoicing and dancing before the Ark, and praising the great God with hymns, and psalms, and sweet tunes of his harp, is well fitted to lift us in thought to the innumerable companies of praising spirits in the heavenly world, with whom the morning stars harmoniously unite, and all the sons of light shout for joy. But, above all, we must regard these glorious oracles in connection with

Messiah and his kingdom, and the conversion of the world to him ;—a consideration this, however, which our limits forbid us entering on, but which the Christian reader, through the grace of God, and the teaching of the Divine Spirit, the only efficacious Instructor, cannot fail to anticipate, pray for, and rejoice in the prospect of.

The Ark was now placed in the tent which was prepared for it on Zion ; and David offered peace-offerings and burnt-offerings upon the Altar, and blessed Israel in the name of Jehovah the Lord of Hosts. Thereafter he proceeded to arrange the different orders of the priests and Levites, of the singers and players on different instruments, in order to the increase of the solemnity of the sanctuary services. Jerusalem had now become "the city of the living God," the chief place of devotion for all the saints of Israel, who now began regularly to come thither three times a year to worship their God by joining in the solemn services of the priests and Levites, and pouring out at his altar their prayers and supplications, and refreshing their souls with joyful and sweet songs of adoration and praise, the inspired compositions of their king.

We learn from the 4—7 verses of the xvi. chapter of 1st Chronicles, that immediately after the Ark was deposited in the sacred tent on Mount Zion, David gave out some Psalms to be sung daily before the altar by Asaph (who was next head musician to Heman), and his brethren belonging to his band. The Psalm recorded in that chapter consists chiefly of excerpts of those combined Psalms which he gave as the first to be sung by Asaph, and consists of the first fifteen verses of the cv. (chronologically xxxvii.), the first verse and the last two of the cvi. (chronologically xxxviii.),* and the whole of the xevi. We have already mentioned, that the six Psalms from the xcv. to the c. inclusive, compose one entire song of the loftiest adoration, and belong to that happy period of David's life ; and as we have seen how the xcv. must have been the hymn with which the extraordinary and holy procession commenced when the Ark was taken from the house of Obed-Edom, so we see from the fact of the xevi. having been given out by David to Asaph on that day, that the four following Psalms, which are its other parts, must have been given out along with it. We shall therefore give now these Psalms in succession. They require no introduction. The apostle Paul styles them the "Introduction of the First-born into the world." They are full of Messianic prophecies, and their lofty and magnificent adoring strains far surpass the power of human delineation or description.

PS. XCVI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LIV.

1. O sing unto Jehovah a new song ;
Sing unto Jehovah, all the earth.
2. Sing unto Jehovah, bless ye his name :
Proclaim his salvation from day to day.
3. Declare his glory among the heathen—
Among all nations his wondrous works.

* These two Psalms, it will be remembered, were composed by David when he was in Philistia ; see introduction to them, and exposition.

4. For great is Jehovah, and highly to be praised ;
He is greatly to be revered—He is God above all.
5. For all the gods of the nations are but vain idols ;
But Jehovah hath made the heavens.
6. Glory and majesty attend his presence—
Power and beauty are in his sanctuary.
7. O bring unto Jehovah, ye families of the nations—
Bring unto Jehovah glory and power :
8. Bring unto Jehovah the glory due to his name ;
Carry presents, and come into his courts.
9. O worship Jehovah in holy ornaments ;
Let the whole earth tremble before his presence.
10. Declare ye among the heathen that Jehovah reigneth—
That He who established the world, not to be moved,
Shall judge the nations with uprightness.
11. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth shout for joy—
Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof :
12. Let the field exult, and all that is in it :
Let then all the trees of the forest sing aloud
13. Before Jehovah : for he cometh,
For he shall come to judge the earth :
He shall judge the world in righteousness,
And the nations according to his faithfulness.*

PS. XCVII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LV.

1. Jehovah reigneth ; let the earth shout for joy :
Let the multitude of the islands rejoice.
2. Clouds and darkness are round about him ;
Righteousness and judgment are the basis of his throne.†
3. A fire runneth before him,
And shall consume his enemies round about.
4. His lightnings illuminated the world ;
The earth saw it ; therefore she trembled.

* The characteristic of these adoring songs is, that in them Jehovah is represented as having now established his throne in such a position as that all the nations of the earth were more immediately concerned with it than they had been before. Jehovah had now established the sceptre of Judah, and erected his throne in Zion, and therefore the reign of Shiloh, unto whom was to be "the gathering of the nations," had begun in a certain sense. Hence the loud and repeated Messianic invitations to all nations and families of the earth. But the holy Psalmist penetrates into a deeper futurity than even the general conversion of the nations to Jehovah the Son, the God of Israel and King of Zion, for the Spirit leads him down to the consummation of all things, even to the last judgment.

† This and the next verse refer to the scenes before the Ark and Cherubim newly erected on Zion. Jehovah on the throne is the Shechinah, between the Cherubim, upon the mercy-seat, which covered the Law of the Lord, wherein were engraven his righteousness and judgments; hence the righteousness and judgment in the Ark are styled, "the basis of his throne." The clouds ascending from the altar of incense and burnt offerings, are the clouds and the darkness before him; still there was light before him, the splendour of the sacred flame. Verses 4, 5, and 6 are descriptive of the glorious scenes at Sinai, at the giving of the Law.

5. Mountains melted like wax at the presence of Jehovah,—
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
6. The heavens declared his righteousness,
And all the nations have seen his glory.
7. Ashamed be all those who serve a graven image—
Who boast themselves in vain idols :—
Fall down before him, all ye gods.*
8. Zion heard it and rejoiced; and the daughters of Judah did
shout for joy,
Because of thy judgments, O Jehovah.
9. Because thou art the Jehovah Most High over all the earth :
Thou, O God, art exceedingly exalted above all.
10. O ye that love Jehovah, hate what is evil :
He who preserveth the souls of his saints,
Shall deliver them from the power of the wicked.
11. Light is sown for the righteous,†
And great joy for the upright in heart.
12. Rejoice in Jehovah, O ye righteous,
And render thanks to the remembrance of His holiness.

PS. XCVIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LVI.

A SONG OF PRAISE.

1. O sing unto Jehovah a new song ;
For he hath done marvellous things :
His own right hand, and his holy arm,
Have obtained for him the victory.
2. Jehovah hath made known his salvation :
He hath displayed his righteousness in the sight of the heathen.

* The apostle Paul seems to have understood under אֱלֹהִים (Elohim), in this passage, "angels" (Heb. i. 6.) So the LXX. render it, from which his is a quotation; and as "Elohim," according to that apostle, often means "angels" (see Heb. ii. 2, &c.), so we may understand both from it. Before Jesus, to whose triumphant reign Paul understands these Psalms to refer, shall fall down, all the "Elohim" of the heathen, and all the angels of God shall worship him. As the word "Elohim" may signify "angels" as well as "gods," so "Hish-tachvu," means as well to "fall down prostrate," as "to worship."

+ "A light is sown for the righteous;" a more glorious, a more comprehensive, and a more expressive Messianic prophecy we cannot imagine. From the 8th verse the Psalmist begins to describe the joy and exultation of Zion (under which figure the church was meant), and of the daughters of Judah, in the judgments of God; in that Jehovah had exalted himself there, the idols of the Jebusites were destroyed and their altars crushed, while God's throne was erected—an altar built to his name—the priests and Levites consecrated, and the tabernacle services established, on the holy mountain. But all these things were shadows, having no light in themselves, but like the moon which receiveth light from the sun, so they received their light from the innate brilliant light of the Antitype; and when they were exhibited, they, as the Divinely appointed "Schoolmaster," pointed to Christ, the Great Light which was to enlighten the world. Now what can be more gloriously expressed than when David says, that by all these exercises "a light was sown for the righteous;" it was sown in the soil of types and shadows, but it was to spring up in its own time, and to shine with so great a brilliancy from Zion hill as to enlighten every land.

3. He hath remembered his mercy and faithfulness to the house of Israel :
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.*
4. Shout aloud unto Jehovah, all the earth :
Break forth into joy, and chaunt, and sing praise.
5. Sing praise unto the Lord to the harp—
To the harp, along with the voice of adoring praise.
6. With trumpets, and the sound of a cornet,
Shout aloud before Jehovah the King.
7. Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof—
The world and her inhabitants.
8. Let the floods clap their hands—
Let the mountains shout together
9. Before Jehovah : for he cometh to judge the earth ;
He shall judge the world in righteousness,
And the nations with uprightness.†

PS XCIX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LVII.

1. Jehovah reigneth ; let the nations tremble :
He abideth between the Cherubim ; let the earth shake.
2. Jehovah is great in Zion,
And exalted is He above all nations.
3. Let them praise thy name, for it is great, and terrible, and holy.
4. And the King of Glory loveth justice :
Thou hast established uprightness ;
Thou hast executed justice and righteousness in Israel.
5. Exalt ye Jehovah our God,
And worship at His footstool, for He is holy.

* From the first three verses of this Psalm we see again that the primary references in these Psalms are to the recent conquest of Mount Zion, which remained for so many centuries in the power and possession of the heathen, and to the victory of Israel over the Philistines in two wars. Inasmuch as by the conquest of Mount Zion, Jehovah's residence on his beloved mountain was obtained and secured, it is called, in the last clause of verse 1, Jehovah's own victory, which had been obtained by his Omnipotent arm when "He remembered, or revived, his mercy and faithfulness unto the house of Israel," i.e. by fulfilling his promise to give them entire possession of the land. The expression, "a new song," which the Psalmist calls upon Israel to sing to Jehovah, both in this and in Ps. xvi., evidently refers to the song of Moses after Israel's deliverance from Egypt at the Red Sea. The latter had been till now the old song of deliverance; and the Psalmist made this celestial song contained in these Psalms a new song of praise for deliverance from the formidable and deadly Philistines, and for the conquest of Mount Zion, by which Jehovah had again made known his salvation unto Israel, to all the neighbouring nations.

† The concluding verses of this Psalm are the same in sentiment with Psalm xcvi., being a general call on all the inhabitants of the world, as also, in glorious poetical figures, on all nature, to be prepared for the last judgment. A joyful expectation of the great judgment day must presuppose a conversion unto God, for only such as are the children of God can anticipate the coming of that day with joy.

The next Psalm begins in the same words as Psalm xcvi., so that we see the original arrangement of these six adoring songs to be the following. The xcv. was the opening hymn at the removing of the Ark from the house of Obed-Edom; the xcvi. and xcvi. constitute the one main part of the whole, both forming an entire half; and so the xcvi. and xcix. form together the second main part; and the c. forms the conclusion of the whole.

6. Moses and Aaron among his priests,
And Samuel among those that called on His name :
Who called upon Jehovah and he answered them.
7. In the pillar of cloud he spake unto them :
They observed his testimonies, and the ordinance which he gave them.
8. O Jehovah our God, thou didst answer them :
Thou wast a pardoning God unto them,
Still didst thou avenge the actions of their own invention.
9. Exalt ye Jehovah our God, and worship at his holy mountain,
For holy is Jehovah our God.*

PS. C. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LVIII.

A SONG OF PRAISE AT THE PRESENTING OF THE THANK-OFFERING.

1. O let the whole earth shout aloud unto Jehovah.
2. O serve ye Jehovah with joy :
Come ye before him with the voice of singing.
3. Know ye that Jehovah alone is God ;
He made us, and his we are,†

* The leading subject in the Psalm is to celebrate the holiness and the rectitude of the Great King Jehovah, who hath established His throne in Zion : "Jehovah reigneth; let the nations tremble. . . . Jehovah is great in Zion . . . thy name . . . is terrible and holy . . . the King of Glory loveth justice. . . . Thou hast executed justice and righteousness in Jacob," &c. The Psalmist then proceeds to illustrate this, by showing, that even these saints, as Moses and Aaron, who acted as Mediators between that holy God and his people, and often turned God's wrath into mercy by their intercession; that even they were punished for their own faults. Samuel is also mentioned in verse 6; but this is not done for the sake of the argument, but only in as far as he was the third intercessor for Israel after Moses and Aaron, and stood likewise several times in the gap, and called upon the Lord, and was answered. Moses is called a "priest" in verse 6; and surely he was so, for he acted as a high priest before Aaron was consecrated (see Exod. xxiv. 6-8), and so he did during the eight days of the consecration of the tabernacle and priests (see Lev. viii. 9.). The prophet Samuel was a Levite, a descendant of Korah (see 1 Chron. vi. 22-38), though his father lived in Ephratha on Mount Ephraim, for the Levites having no territory of their own, were dispersed among all the tribes of Israel; but Samuel acted as a priest, because he was a Nazarite from the womb. 1 Sam. i. 11, 28. Every one of these three saints stood between God and his people at divers times, and procured Jehovah's mercy for Israel (Exod. xxxii. 11-14; Num. xi. 2, xiv. 13-20, xvii. 11-14; 1 Sam. vii. 5-10, xii. 18-23.). Though the first clause of verse 7 refers to Moses and Aaron exclusively (Exod. xxxiii. 9; Lev. x. 8, xi. 1, xiv. 33; Num. xii. 5), the second may refer to Samuel also, in as far as he observed Jehovah's testimonies faithfully. The expression, "the ordinance which he gave them," though it is in the singular, may include all the ordinances prescribed in the law, as the word *pr* (Chok) means also a conditional promise: If thou keep my law, then I will bless thee and preserve thee. See Exod. xv. 24-26. The Psalmist then addresses Jehovah, who did answer his servants when they called on him, saying: "Thou wast a pardoning God unto them," unto Moses and Aaron when they interceded for Israel: "Still thou didst avenge *לִילֹתָם* (Ailotham) the actions of their own invention," i.e. their voluntary deeds, for which they had no authority. See Num. xx. 7-14, 22-29; Deut. iii. 23-29. Thus it was proved that Jehovah's name is terrible and holy, and that he had executed, and would still execute, justice and judgment in Jacob.

† The Keri here, as well as several old manuscripts, the Chaldee, &c., read *וְלוֹ* (Velo) "and his," instead of *וְלֹא* (Veloh), "and not." While the Kethiv reading "and not" has no sense, and distorts the harmony of the whole passage; the Keri reading renders it sublime,

- His people, and the sheep of his pasture.
4. O come into his gates with thank-offering—
 Into his courts, with adoring song :
 Render praise unto him—bless ye his name.
 5. For Jehovah is good—his tender mercy is everlasting,
 And his faithfulness from generation to generation.

Such was the first provision made by the sweet and devoted Psalmist for the sanctuary of his God. Asaph and his party were then appointed to remain before the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah, "to minister before the Ark continually, as every day's work required." 1 Chron. xvi. 37. But Heman and Jeduthun with their different bands, and Zadok the High Priest, and the greater number of his brethren, were appointed by David to stop at Gibeon, where the tabernacle stood, and the great altar of burnt-offerings, "to offer burnt-offerings unto the Lord upon the altar continually, morning and evening, and to do according to all that is written in the law of the Lord which he commanded Israel," &c., ver. 40, 41.

Joshua, the son of Sirach, speaks of David in the following words: "In all his works he praised the Holy One Most High with words of glory; with his whole heart he sung songs, and loved Him that made him. He set singers also before the altar, that by their voices, they might make sweet melody and daily sing praises in their songs. He beautified their feasts, and set in order their solemn times perfectly, that they might praise his holy name, and that the temple might sound from the early morn." Eccles. xlvii. 8—10.

INTRODUCTION TO THOSE PSALMS COMPOSED BY DAVID WHEN HE SOLEMNLY PAID
 TO THE LORD THE VOWS WHICH HE HAD VOWED TO HIM IN THE TIMES OF HIS
 DISTRESS, WHEN PERSECUTED BY SAUL.

See Psalms lvi. chronologically xii. 12, 13, and exposition; xxii. chronologically xiii. 25, and exposition; and liv. chronologically xxix. 6.

To this brilliant period of David's life, as king on the throne of Israel, many of the Psalms seem to belong, especially those of praise and adoration, which were composed with the exclusive design of solemnizing the sacred services of Sabbath and feast days, &c., both before the Ark at Zion, and the great altar of burnt-offerings which stood with the tabernacle at Gibeon. But as such Psalms have nothing to do with the History, they must give place to such as have more or less relation to it, and to such also as are of a more individual character. And among the latter there are several which claim to have been the first composed in this portion of David's life, at which we have now arrived. These are they which refer

and is doubtless the original. "This people," says Jehovah in another place, "have I formed for myself;" and this is exactly the confession of the Psalmist here. "Know ye that Jehovah is God; He made us, and his we are," i.e. by creation and by providence; but more than this, he adds, we are "His people, and the sheep of his pasture," i.e. his covenant people whom he has delivered from misery and exalted to salvation; and hence he has every right to our praises and thanksgivings.

to the solemn payment of the vows which he vowed to Jehovah in the days of his distress. The tabernacle services at Gibeon, and the services before the Ark at Zion, being now fully arranged, and the priests and Levites being now watching in the sanctuary, and the fire upon the altar of God being now ready to receive the burnt-offerings for a sweet-smelling savour to the Lord Most High—David would no longer delay to pay what he owed to the God of his salvation, but would take the first opportunity to praise him among the congregation, and to acknowledge among the saints His tender mercies.

The Psalms which bear every mark of belonging to that occasion, are the following, viz. the lxi.—a Psalm which has been universally misunderstood, as we shall see—the lxv. and lxvi., and also the lxvii., which forms the conclusion to the preceding three. The cxvi. is another, which has expressive reference to the above occasion, as it was sung at the altar when David paid his vows, and made public confession of Jehovah his God; but as it belongs to a series which was given out by him to be performed in the temple on the Passover feast, we omit it here.—With regard to the lxi. Psalm, as we have already hinted, its meaning and reference have been perverted, by a false rendering of one word, and a mistaking of the tense of another word, both occurring in the first and second verses. As will be seen from the exposition, it is not plaintive, nor was it composed when David fled from Absalom. Throughout it is full of triumph and joy.

PS. LXI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LIX.

(Lamnatzeach), "To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A PSALM OF DAVID.

PART FIRST.

Performed on the harp called Neginath.

1. Hear, O God, the voice of my praise : accept my prayer.
2. When from the extremities of the land I called upon thee
When my heart was overwhelmed—
Thou didst lead me into a Rock that is higher than I.
3. For thou hast been a shelter unto me—
A strong tower from the presence of the enemy.
4. I shall dwell in thy tabernacle even to eternity :
I will take shelter under the covert of thy wings, Selah, for ever.

The primary meaning of רִנָּה (Rinnah), in the first verse, is, "a shout of joy," "a sound of triumph," "to give forth a thrill of cheerful song," "a song of exultation, or, of rejoicing." Ps. xxx. 5, xxxii. 7, 11, xxxiii. 1, xlii. 4, xlvii. 1, li. 15, lix. 16, lxiii. 7, lxxxi. 1, xcii. 4; Isa. xii. 6, xxxv. 10. These are but a few of the very numerous instances in which this word appears in Scripture to denote, a shouting for joy. But in most of these places it stands to signify that sweet melodious praise, which the saints accompanied with their prayer. This last meaning it has especially

when it is joined with תפלה (Tephilah), "prayer," because of whatever nature their prayer was, it was always attended with praise; and because of the melodious tone in which they used to chaunt their prayers, that part of them which contained the praise was called "Rinnah," while the other was called "Tephilah." For instance, on the joyous and glorious day of the dedication of Solomon's temple, the king offered a long prayer to God, which was mingled with adoring praise; and towards the conclusion of the first part of it he says, "And now, O God of Israel, . . . have respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken אֶל הַרְנָה (El Harinnah) to the voice of praise (erroneously rendered, "unto the cry") וְאֶל הַתְּפִלָּה (Veel Hatphilah), and to the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee to-day." 1 Kings viii. 26—28. Here we have the definition of prayer, which always consisted of "Rinnah," praise, or voice of praise (which includes confession of our nothingness in the sight of God), and Tephilah, prayer. Such are all the prayers of the Old Testament saints, whether the numerous prayers of David, the prayer of Solomon, or those of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, &c. And in Jeremiah vii. 16 this is the meaning of Rinnah in conjunction with Tephilah. As some prayers, however, were burdened with sighs and griefs, we may in such cases allow Rinnah to denote the chaunting voice of complaint, but at the same time it must refer to the praising part of the prayer, though the face of the individual may have been washed with tears. In the 3d verse of that heart-rending Psalm, the lxxxviii. (chronologically xviii.), we have rendered the word by "the sound of wailing; 1st, Because in that Psalm, as in the xxii., or in this book the xiii., even the praising part is commingled with the most touching complaints; and 2d, Because we had no other substitute. Now, from what has been stated, the reader will perceive that it remains with us to judge, from the circumstances in which a prayer was composed by the inspired penman, not only what weight is to be laid on the word Rinnah, which must signify the praising part of the prayer, but also whether that praising part must have been accompanied with a wailing sound or no. We cannot say of Solomon's prayer that it was so accompanied, for his heart was surely overflowing with triumphant holy joy. No less joyful was David at the time when he composed the Psalm before us, joyful in the God of his salvation, who, as is expressed in verses 2d and 3d, *had* led him into a mighty Rock of Defence, *had been* a shelter for him, and *had* delivered him from his enemy. It is strange how learned men could so mistake a Psalm of triumphant adoring joy as to turn it into a tragic complaint.

Thus we have seen one error into which commentators have fallen by rendering Rinnah, "cry," and by understanding under it, complaint, or mourning in time of distress. Let us now examine whether the 2d verse has afforded them any ground for their mistake. Whether we render the expression מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ (Miktzeh Haaretz) "from the ends of the earth," or as we have translated it, "from the extremities of the land" (*i.e.*, Palestine), we must always understand it as referring to a time of David's exile either past or present. This must be decided by the two following words אֶלֶיָּה אֶקְרָא (Elecha Ekrah), which must either be read in the present tense, "I cry unto thee," as in the common version, or in the past,

"I have called upon thee," as we have rendered it. Let us turn, therefore, to a parallel phrase in the 6th verse of the xviii. Psalm, which is a song of triumph and joy : **בַּצָּר לִי** (Batzar li), "In my distress (these two words stand in the same position at the beginning of this verse as the words *Miktzeh haaretz*, "from the extremities of the land," stand in the 2d verse of our Psalm) **אֶקְרָא יְהוָה** (Ekrah Jehovah) "I called upon the Lord;" for so by all commentators it is rendered in the past. Now, is it not wrong, and inconsistent with the true meaning of the words to give them different renderings in these two places? Why has David been understood to mean by the Ekrah in the one Psalm, "I have called," and by the Ekrah in the other, "I will cry?" The Psalm before us maintains throughout a cheerful and joyous strain; but by perverting Rinnah, which means "song of praise," into a "cry," and Ekrah, which, as in Psalm xviii., refers to past and bygone troubles, into present agony, "I will cry," it has been changed into a meaningless complaint of distress.

Turning to the contents of the Psalm itself, it is, as has been already stated, a song of joy and triumph. David having been delivered from the hand of Saul, and from all his distresses, enters Jehovah's sanctuary with praise and prayer, and comes to surround His altar, and pay there his vow. In verse 1 he prays God to hear and regard his Rinnah, the voice of his praise, and to accept his prayer. And for what reason does he come? It is to thank God for past mercies. He remembers his former lamentable state in the cave of Adullam, and his wanderings in the deserts and in exile, when he was in constant danger of his life, and contrasts it with his present circumstances, now a mighty monarch on the throne, and with a tabernacle, and the Ark of the Covenant in or near his palace; and therefore he says, "When from the extremities of the land I called upon thee, when my heart was overwhelmed (the reader is earnestly requested to compare Psalm cxliii., or in this book xvi. 3, 4), Thou didst lead me into a Rock that is higher than I;" i.e., into a Rock of Defence, into safety and tranquillity. "Higher than I" means, that he never could have reached it of himself, but that it was God who had lifted him up and put him into the Rock. In the third verse he states what he means by the "Rock," and who was the Rock: "For Thou hast been a shelter unto me—a strong tower from the presence of the enemy." The strong Rock into which he was set was none other than Jehovah himself, who enabled him to put his confidence in Him, and who fulfilled to him His promises, and established him on his throne in Zion. And seeing how blessed an abode the strong Rock was, he resolved to remain by it for ever: "I shall dwell in thy tabernacle **עוֹלָמִים** (Olamim) throughout eternity," or in both worlds; "I will take shelter under the covert of thy wings." These figures are taken from the tabernacle and Cherubim, but there is a substance in the wish of the holy Psalmist which is beyond the tabernacle made with hands. "Under the covert of Jehovah's wings" (the Shechinah rested under the wings of the Cherubim) he was to take refuge for ever. This indeed was figurative so long as he was to sojourn on earth, but when the time came that his soul was to be bound up in the bundle of life with Jehovah his God, then it would be a glorious reality; and his chief hope was to be with the Lord throughout eternity—to see him face to face—and to rejoice in the light of his gracious countenance.

In the second part of the Psalm David states, first, the ground of his hope that he would abide before Jehovah for ever; and next, prays for farther blessings, which are of strictly Messianic reference :

5. For thou, O God, hast heard my vows—
Thou hast established the inheritance of those who fear thy name.
6. Thou shalt add days to the days of the king ;
His years shall extend throughout all generations.
7. He shall dwell forever in Jehovah's presence ;
Mercy and truth shall preserve him like the manna.*
8. Thus will I sing the praise of thy name continually,
When from day to day I shall perform my vows.

That the reader may fully understand David's meaning in the 5th verse, he is requested to read and compare Psalm lvi., or the xii. in this book—especially the last two verses, where the Psalmist had vowed a vow to the Lord ; and also Psalm cxlii. 7, or xv. in this book, with the expositions of both. The 6th verse evidently and distinctly refers to the everlasting continuance of David's kingdom in that of the Messiah his promised son.† On verse 7th see foot note. The fact of eternal life and happiness in Jehovah's presence is so clearly stated as to require neither explanation nor evidence ; whatever infidels may say, all true Christians will believe and rejoice in it. Seeing that Jehovah had not only preserved and blessed him, and exalted him to the throne, but had also made him dwell near his own holy tent, David states in the last verse that he would be no more obliged to delay the performance of his vows, but would be able to pay them daily, and to accompany them with praises to His holy name.

Psalm lxv., though it does not refer exclusively to any occasion of David's paying his vows, yet seems to belong to that order, as from internal evidence will be apparent. But as the foregoing one bears entirely on him,

* The words מן יצטרבו (Man Yintzerubu) have been translated by none of the commentators on this passage, but they can mean nothing else than that the mercy and truth of God should preserve him in the Divine presence, even as the golden pot of manna was preserved before Jehovah beside the Ark. All the figures here used by the Psalmist are taken from the Tabernacle, Ark, and Cherubim, such as "abiding in Jehovah's tabernacle," "taking shelter under the shadow of His wings;" and when he says that he would "dwell for ever in Jehovah's presence," he states by what means, viz., by His mercy and truth, because He vouchsafed the promise to him, and He was faithful to fulfil it. David then uses that figure, saying, that Jehovah's mercy and truth would preserve him in His presence, even as the pot of manna was wonderfully preserved before Him, as a monument of His mercy and truth to Israel. Exod. xvi. 32—34; Heb. ix. 3—5.

† We have already had occasion to remark that Dr Hengstenberg, in his work on the Psalms, seems to have thought it necessary to banish from them as far as possible all allusion to Christ, to immortality, and to eternity. Accordingly, when he comes to a Psalm like the above, in which these subjects are so prominently set forth, he evidently labours agonizingly. He seems, however, to think that he has managed his point, for he has tried to make out (to his own satisfaction at least) that these things only refer to the natural posterity of David—that they have nothing whatever to do with Christ. So, according to this notion, David's eternity was confined to this world, and to his mortal successors in it. Such lamentable perversions we must believe to be, not the result of ignorance, but of design. His whole exposition of this Psalm is miserable, tasteless, presumptuous.

and on his individual relation to God, as the King of Israel and the father of Shiloh, so the lxv. is of a general character, and David speaks in it as the representative of the nation, and of their relation to God in the newly-established Zion.

PS. LXV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LX.

Lamnatzeach : "To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A VOCAL SONG OF PRAISE COMPOSED BY DAVID.

1. Praise waiteth patiently for Thee in Zion, O God ;
And unto Thee shall the vow be performed.
2. O Thou Hearer of prayer, all flesh shall come before Thee.
3. Though the charge of sin be too powerful against us,
Thou wilt expiate our transgressions.
4. Blessed be he whom Thou shalt choose and befriend,
That he should dwell in Thy courts :
We shall be satisfied with the riches of Thy house,
O Thou Holy One in Thy temple !

Zion was now established as the residence of the God of Israel ; the servants of the tabernacle were consecrated, and attending at the altar to present to him the sacrifices and oblations of His people ; the Lord of hosts, who delights in praise, was, as it were, waiting between the Cherubim for the prayers and praises due to Him from His chosen ones ;—and the sweet Psalmist, therefore, opens this lovely song by personifying praise, as if waiting patiently, or silently, for the first opportunity to pour herself into the bosom of the Ancient of Days, to whom she belongs, and who is delighted with her, and without whom she can have no rest. The solemnities in the temple or tabernacle services, as at feasts and on Sabbath days, and especially the paying of solemn vows, formed, as it were, the vehicle by which praise was conveyed to Jehovah. Hence the Psalmist says, "Praise waiteth patiently, or silently (so דָּמְיָה [Dumiah] signifies ; compare Ps. xxxvii., or in this book xxxv. 7) for thee in Zion : " but in the second clause he says, that she will not have to wait long, for "unto Thee," *i.e.* to Him for whom praise waiteth patiently, but eagerly, "shall the vow be performed," or paid. Though נָדָר (Neder), "vow," is here in the singular, still it includes all the vows paid by God's people, at the solemn performance of which praise always abounded ; though David at the time anticipated first the payment of his own vows and his public confession, as will be seen in the next Psalm. He then proceeds to show that the payment of vows would not be confined to himself alone, or only to a few others, but would extend to multitudes who experience that the Lord is a present help in time of trouble, and that He is the hearer and answerer of prayer, —all such would make solemn vows to Him, and would repair to Zion, with praises and adoring songs upon their lips, to pay their vows, and pour out their souls before Him in His sanctuary : "O Thou Hearer of prayer, all flesh shall come before Thee." There will be no lack of opportunity or reason for praise being given to Jehovah, as long as mortal man has to tread

the wilderness of this world, and to eat of the bread of sorrow, and drink of the water of affliction,—yea, as long as God hears and answers prayer, praise must abound, and flow from the mouths of those who have “tasted and seen that He is good.”

David goes on in the 3d verse to show, that the paying of vows is not the only opportunity afforded to the children of God of praising him—that not only have they often to call upon him in time of distress, and to offer sacrifices of joy when restored, but they have also sins to be pardoned, and Jehovah alone can pardon them. Hence they must often come before the Lord, and approach His altar with sin-offerings and burnt-offerings, with trespass-offerings and thank-offerings, with oblations and free gifts. “The charge of sin,” דְּבַר עֲוֹנוֹת (Divrey Avonoth) stands here as

דְּבַר מִשְׁפָּט (Devar Mishpat) “a matter of judgment,” or a “lawsuit”—2 Chron. xix. 6; comp. Exod. xviii. 16, 22, 26; Deut. xvii. 8—in like manner דְּבַר פֶּשַׁע (Devar Pesha) means, “a matter, or suit of trespass;”

Exod. xxii. 9 (in all these instances the translators have failed to comprehend the real meaning of the words): And so in our passage, David says, “Though the charge of sin (Divrey Avonoth), or iniquities, be too powerful against us,” or even, “though the burden of our sins be heavy upon us, Thou wilt expiate our transgressions.” This was another cause and opportunity for praise being offered to Jehovah in Zion, for who is there who hath no sins to be pardoned? Who will not pour out his soul before Him in prayer and thanksgiving for His tender mercy, in having provided the blood of sprinkling to cleanse us from our sin and guilt, and to make us pure and holy before His presence? Though our limits forbid us to enlarge here, yet we are persuaded that the Christian reader will not hastily pass from the Messianic references contained in this and similar Psalms, for in them they will find much spiritual light and nourishment. In the 4th verse David describes the great privilege opened to the saints in Jehovah's courts as another ground and opportunity for praising God in Zion: “Blessed, or happy be he whom Thou shalt choose and befriend, that he should dwell in thy courts.” The author was accustomed, in former days, to consider this clause of the verse as applicable chiefly to the priests and Levites, the servants of the tabernacle; but he is now persuaded that as the Messiah, as the gospel declares, hath made us priests and Levites to God, so David means here those saints to whom Jehovah should give tokens of His grace, and should cause His Spirit to bear testimony in their souls that they are His own. “Dwelling in Thy courts” is a strongly figurative expression, God's house being considered at that time the great store of all blessings for His children; and dwelling there just meant to be continually there in spirit, though often necessarily absent in body—as the devoted Christian may be said to reside in Jehovah's spiritual temple in the heavenly Zion, having his eye constantly fixed on Golgotha's cross, and feeling that he is a temple of the Spirit in himself. That David does not speak of particular individuals in the first clause of the verse, but embraces all the children of God throughout the nation, may be learned from the second clause, in which he addresses God in the name of the whole community as their king: “We shall be satisfied,” or abundantly filled, “with the riches of thy house,” i.e. with all the blessings issuing from thy house,—

with salvation and deliverance vouchsafed to those who perform a vow made in time of distress, as in verse 1st,—with the hearing and answering of prayer, as in verse 2d,—and with the pardoning of sin and transgression, as in verse 3d. But the 4th verse sums up the reasons and grounds of the whole: “We shall be satisfied with the riches of thy house, O thou Holy One in thy temple.” Comp. Hab. ii. 20; Zech. ii. 13.

David next proceeds to point out another cause for praising God in Zion, viz., national deliverances from enemies, which had always been accompanied by signs and miracles; such as the deliverance from Egypt, and deliverances in the wilderness, and in Canaan itself.

5. Of Thy stupendous acts of deliverance, Thou wilt make us sing, O God of our salvation;*

* This verse has been universally misunderstood by translators and commentators. The Psalmist's object is to show how praise waiteth for God in Zion, and how many reasons and opportunities Israel had to praise and adore Him. These are enumerated, verse 1st, in the case of those who had to pay their vows; verse 2d, in the case of those whose prayers were heard and answered; verse 3d, those whose sins were pardoned; and verse 4th, those to whom Jehovah shows kindness and love, and whom he feeds with His blessings, or figuratively, “with the fatness of His house,”—all these individually would praise God in Zion. But David turns now to the nation as such, and remembers that all their deliverances were effected so wonderfully and mysteriously, and were such glorious manifestations of Divine omnipotence, that they afforded grounds of praise and adoring song to the people of God, and that thus also praise waiteth for Jehovah in Zion. נִרְאֹת (Noraoth) signifies those wonder-

ful or stupendous acts of the Almighty, which produce awe and astonishment. Deut. x. 21, “He is thy praise, and He is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things (or more literally, that hath wrought these wonderful miracles) which thine eyes have seen;” see also chap. xi. 2, 3. Here we have the same word “Noraoth” as in our Psalm, to signify “the terrible, or wonderful miracles,” which Jehovah wrought for the deliverance of Israel. Compare 2 Sam. vii. 23, where the same word is used by David to the same purpose, and Psalm xlv. 4. The word צַדִּיק (Tzedek), which is always rendered “righteousness,” has many

and various significations, which our limits will not allow us to specify, but some of these are “happiness,” “prosperity,” “deliverance,” which last is the meaning we have assigned to it in our Psalm. So it should be rendered in the following passages, viz., Isa. xxxii. 17, “And the produce,” or consequences, “of deliverance shall be peace,” &c., i.e. the fruit of righteousness, deliverance, and the fruit of deliverance, peace; xlv. 8, “Let the skies pour down deliverance”—(see the connection there); xlv. 13; xlviii. 18; li. 5, “My deliverance is near,” i.e. the deliverance which I promised to send to the human race, “my salvation is going forth.” Numerous other passages would assume a brighter appearance if their real and true sense was given, especially the Messianic, such as Isa. xlii. 6, where Jehovah says to the Saviour, “I Jehovah have appointed thee for deliverance,” i.e. to deliver and save souls.—We have thus seen that the two words, Noraoth Betzedek, mean nothing else than the wonderful, stupendous, and miraculous deliverances, which Israel often experienced; and it now remains to be shown that the word תַּאֲנוּנוּ (Taannenu) signifies, that Jehovah would make his

people sing of these wonderful deliverances. The word יָאֵן (Yaau), besides its other significations, means also that mode of chanting and singing in which the singing parties answered each other in turn, and so it signifies alternate or responsive singing. This mode of singing was used in those days, especially by the daughters of Israel, after a great deliverance had been vouchsafed. So Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, after the deliverance from Egypt, and the miracle at the Red Sea, went forth triumphantly before the daughters of Israel with timbrels and with dances, “and sang, or chaunted, unto them,” &c. Exod. xv. 21; it being erroneously rendered, “she answered them,” for no one had asked her anything which required her to answer. In Exod. xxxii. 18, the words קֹל אֲנוֹתִי (Kol Anothi) are rendered in the common version even, “the noise of them that sing,” though the rendering is perverted in the former passage. In 1 Sam. xxi. 11, יָאֵן (Yaau) is in the common version, “sing one to another,” in the dances after Israel's triumph when David slew Goliath.—Now, surely, the reader will understand, that our passage means nothing else but “of thy stupendous, or wonderful acts of deliverance, Thou wilt make us sing, or triumphantly chaunt, O God of our salvation;” i.e. Thou who hast so wrought again and again, when thou didst bring us salvation and deliverance.

- Who art the sure Preserver of all the ends of the earth,
And of the inhabitants of the remotest sea-shores :
6. Who confirmed the mountains by His strength ;
Who is girded with omnipotence :
7. Who restraineth the raging of the seas,
The raging of their waves, along with the tumult of the nations.
8. And whilst the remotest inhabitants shall tremble at thy miraculous signs,
Thou wilt make the delivered ones at morn and even to chaunt thy praise.

While in the former part of the Psalm, David mentioned some individual opportunities when praise should be given to the Lord in Zion, in this part he shows that Israel, as a nation, would have opportunity of praising and adoring Him, and of singing of those stupendous acts of wonder which had invariably characterized their deliverances : "Of thy stupendous," or of thy astonishing and wonderful "acts of deliverance, Thou wilt make us sing, O God of our salvation ;" *i.e.*, as Thou hast made us sing of them at the Red Sea, and often in the wilderness, and oftener still in Canaan itself in the days of Joshua and his battles—when the walls of Jericho were razed by a super-human hand—when stones from heaven were cast down upon Israel's enemies, and when a double day's light was granted to Israel till they routed their adversaries ; in the days of the Judges also, as Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Samuel ; and even in the time of David himself, when a miraculous deliverance was wrought by his hand when he slew Goliath. On all these occasions Israel was called, as a nation, to praise and adore Jehovah, their wonder-working God, in songs of joy and triumph. Inasmuch as Jehovah was the same, and the deliverances He granted to Israel continued to be miraculous and extraordinary in their nature, David shows how, at such an opportunity, praise would be presented to him in Zion. (See critical note on the first two clauses of verse 5.) In the third clause of the verse David praises Him whom he called the "God of our salvation," and from whom he expected miraculous signs of deliverance, by showing, first, that He was not only the God of Israel, but also מִבְּטַח (Mivtach), "the sure Preserver," or faithful surety, "of all the ends of the earth (*i.e.*, of the inhabitants of the ends of the earth), and of the inhabitants of the remotest sea-shores." In the 6th verse he speaks of the omnipotence of the Creator, and that therefore nothing could be impossible with Him. The 7th verse contains a very expressive reference to the sublime miracle wrought at the Red Sea, when by the tremendous east wind which God caused to blow and to make the sea rage, a passage of safety through was secured to Israel ; after which Jehovah again restrained the rage of the waves, and caused the mighty walls of water to fall back upon and sweep away the Egyptian army. Thus by one act a double rage was restrained, that of the sea and that of the Egyptians ; "Who restraineth the raging of the seas, the raging of their waves, along with the tumult of the nations." And what was the result of that wonder ? While the remotest inhabitants trembled when they heard of it, the delivered Israelites were encouraged thereby to sing praises to their omnipotent God, and to adore Him day and night. Anticipating, there-

fore, such deliverances, and their happy results, David, in the 8th verse, says, "And while the remotest inhabitants shall tremble at thy miraculous signs, Thou wilt make the delivered ones," or the delivered ones Thou wilt make, "at morn and even to chaunt thy praise."* Thus he shows how opportunities would be afforded to the people of God to praise and adore his name in Zion.

David proceeds, lastly, to describe another opportunity when Israel, as a nation, would praise Jehovah their God in Zion. This opportunity consists in national prosperity, when He would give fruitful seasons and regular and copious rains (of which the country stood much in need), and would increase their flocks and herds :—

9. When Thou hast visited and watered the earth ;
When Thou, O God, shalt enrich her exceedingly
By rivulets, with abundance of water—
That Thou mayest provide their corn,
When Thou hast thus prepared her :†
10. When her ridges Thou hast quietly saturated,
And softened her furrows with gentle showers,
Thus blessing her increase :
11. When Thou hast crowned the year with Thy beneficence,
And made Thy paths to distil fertility,—
12. Distil even upon the pleasant pastures in the wilderness,
That the little hills should be girded with splendour :
13. When the meadows be clothed with flocks,
And the valleys be covered with corn ;
Then shall they shout for joy ; then shall they sing.

* The Hebrew word מְצִיאָה (Mutzaey) does not mean "outgoings," but "the brought forth," or "the delivered," as it signifies when a verb: הֵיא מְצִיאָה (Hie Mutzeyth), "she was brought forth," i.e. to the place of execution Gen. xxxviii. 25. The pointers have misunderstood the word here equally with the translators, and have made the vowel *i* instead of *a*. The word Mutzaey, "the delivered," is formed from the verb: הִצִּיאָה (Hitziaey) "to deliver," or "bring forth" (Exod. iii. 10, vi. 6, 26, 27), as מָתָה (Methey), "slain," from the verb הָקִיתָ (Hamith) "to slay," and הָרָגָה (Haragey), "the smitten," or "the slain," from הָרָגָה (Harog), "to smite," or "to slay ;" and therefore, "Mutzaey" in our Psalm means, "the delivered ones." בֹּקֶר וָעֶבֶר (Boker va'evr), "at morn and at even," תְּרַנֵּן (Tarnin), "Thou wilt make to sing or chaunt thy praise." The idea brought out in this passage as it stands in the common version, "Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice," is a very fine one, though obscure. Had it been in the Psalm, however, something might perhaps have been made of it, but it is not there. We must therefore give the "joy," or the singing of praise, to whom it belongs, i.e. to "the delivered ones."

† The arrangement of the clauses of this verse is very peculiar, and has been the cause of much confusion to translators and commentators. A sufficient acquaintance with the peculiarities of Hebrew poetry would have obviated it, and would have saved the remarks about a "river of God." אֱלֹהִים (Elohim), "God," stands quite separate from נָחַל (Peleg), "river," though it appears after it, for the exclamation "O God!" has very often different situations. Though "Peleg" is here in the singular, it is a collective noun, and stands to signify the plural, as "man" oftentimes signifies the whole human race, or "fowl" the whole species of fowls under heaven. Psalm viii. 4, 8. So "Peleg" here means, that all the rivulets which cross the fields may be so abundantly supplied with water, as that a rich crop may thereby be prepared, and finally gathered in by the people of God under His blessing.

Thus has David described how praise waiteth in Zion for Jehovah, and the different opportunities for rendering it afforded to individuals separately, and to the whole nation of Israel together. But as the first opportunity mentioned in the first verse consisted in the paying of solemn vows, and as there was scarcely another Israelite so much indebted to Jehovah as David, or who had so often vowed to the Lord in time of distress, so he immediately put into practice what his lips had uttered. The following Psalm contains the praise and adoration rendered to God in Zion when he paid his vows to Him.

This Psalm is the lxvi., and is divided into four parts by three Selahs. The first two contain the praise of God for his omnipotence and majesty, and an invitation to the whole world to come and join in celebrating his glorious name. The third part consists of a description of the dangers to which David and those with him had been exposed—how it had pleased God, in his mysterious providence, so to expose them, and then to deliver them so wonderfully; and therefore he now comes to pay what he had then vowed, with songs of praise, and triumph, and joy. And the fourth and last contains an invitation on David's part, to all the saints to come and hear his confession as to what Jehovah had done for his soul.

PS. LXVI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXI.

“Lamnatzeach”—“Dedicated to the Chief Cause of all Events.”

A VOCAL SONG OF PRAISE.

PART FIRST.

1. Shout ye with joy unto God, all ye lands :
2. Sing ye of the glory of his name ;
Make ye glorious his praise.
3. Say ye unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works !
Through the greatness of thy strength,
Thine enemies shall submit themselves unto thee.
4. All lands shall worship thee, and shall sing thee praise,
They shall sing the praise of thy name, Selah, always.

The Psalmist had declared in the first verse of the preceding Psalm, that praise waiteth for Jehovah in Zion, which praise would be raised on the occasion of his saints paying their solemn vows unto him, and he opens this Psalm with a loud invitation to all lands (meaning the inhabitants of the whole world) to come and join him in shouting with joy the praises of the great God of Israel. It is evident from the 4th verse that he anticipates that happy time, when all the inhabitants of the world shall know God and render praise and adoration to his holy name, and into their mouths, as it were, he puts words, saying, as in verse 3, “Say ye unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works !” The Hebrew words **מה-נורא מַעֲשֵׂיךָ** (Mah Nora Maasecha) signify, “How terrible thy works ;” but “Nora” being in the singular, while “Maasecha” is in the plural, it is evident that the former does not apply to the latter—not that

the works are terrible, but that Jehovah is made terrible by the manifestation of his Omnipotence in his wonderful works. These wonderful works of God must include here the greatest and the most wonderful of all his works, which is that of redeeming a guilty world by a suffering Messiah, and which work in itself will triumph in, and influence, and convert the world at last, "not by power, nor by might, but by his Spirit." In this sense we must also understand the other part of verse 3d, "Through, or by, the greatness of thy strength, thine enemies shall submit themselves unto thee:" for it is clear from verse 4th, that this "submission" means conversion,—“they shall sing thee praise”—hence, the “greatness of thy strength” must refer to the Omnipotent influences of the Spirit which shall be exerted for the conversion of the world in Jehovah's own time. O Almighty Jehovah! hasten the time when every knee shall bow, every tongue confess, and every soul adore.

PART SECOND.

5. Come, and behold the operations of God;
How terrible is He in the works of wonder for the children of men!
6. When he turned the sea into dry land—
When through the flood they passed on foot:
O how did we then rejoice in him!
7. He who ruleth the universe by his power,
His eyes are bended to look over the nations:
The rebellious shall not exalt themselves, Selah, for ever.

It is evident that this part of the Psalm stands in close connection with the preceding, and that the Psalmist continues to show not only the possibility, but the certainty of the conversion of the whole world to God. He calls upon the nations carefully to regard Jehovah's mighty operations in the typical deliverance of the typical nation of Israel from Egyptian bondage. He shows them the great joy which Israel experienced when they saw the Divine Omnipotence exerted on their behalf at the Red Sea; and he assures them in verse 7, that though Israel was then the only covenanted people of God, still that His eyes watch also over the heathen—that He has not abandoned them, but shall visit them at last, and teach them to know and praise his holy name. "He who ruleth the universe by his power:" עוֹלָם (Olam) in this verse does not stand to signify "for ever," as almost all translators render it, but means "world," or universe, as Eccles. iii. 11; Isa. xxvi. 4.* Thus the Psalmist shows, that with the omnipotent Ruler of the world there is no respect of persons, and that though Israel was then the only people of his mercy and favour, still, says he, עֵינָיו בְּגוֹיִם הַצִּפְנָה (Eynav Bagoyim Titzpenah) "His eyes are bended

* In this passage, the words צִר עוֹלָמִים (Tzur Olamim) are perverted into "everlasting strength," but the verse should read thus, "Trust ye in Jehovah for evermore, for, by Jah (which is the Saviour) hath Jehovah created," or, "formed the worlds," or "the universe," compare John i. 1—3; Heb. i. 2—3; Col. i. 16, and see also the connection of this passage in Isaiah with the two preceding verses.)

to look over the nations," or "to survey them;" but the verb צִפֹּה (Tzapho) signifies that eager "looking about," as of a watchman on his tower, and in our verse, it indicates the careful "looking out" or "planning" of the great Watchman for the time, when all nations shall be converted to him. Thus the verse closes, "The rebellious shall not exalt themselves for ever," *i.e.* they will be humbled and converted at last.

PART THIRD.

8. Bless our God, O ye people,
And raise aloft the sound of his praise.
9. It is he who preserved our soul among the living,
And hath not suffered our feet to slip.

In this part the Psalm takes a sudden turn to the celebration of Jehovah's praise, for the wonderful deliverance which the Lord granted to David and his men when in danger and sufferings under the persecutions of Saul. But as the deliverance from Saul was also in a great part national, the Psalmist calls upon עַמִּים (Amim) the "people" (which means often the different tribes of Israel) to join him on that solemn occasion in blessing God with a loud voice for the preservation of their lives (*i.e.*, David's and his men's) under all the dangers to which they had been exposed under Saul, and on which occasion he vowed that vow which he now paid. In the succeeding verses David addresses himself to God, and recounts the mysterious and wonderful process of suffering and deliverance through which He had led him and his men, and the happy results of the whole.

10. For thou hast proved us, O God;
Thou hast purified us as silver is purified.
11. Thou hast brought us into straits;
Thou hast put a shrivelling into our loins.*
12. Thou hast made a man to ride upon our heads;
We were brought into fire and water;
But thou hast brought us forth to affluence and tranquillity.†
13. I come into thy house with burnt-offerings,
That I may pay unto thee my vows,
14. Which my lips have pronounced,
And my mouth hath spoken when I was in distress.

* The noun מִצְדָּה (Metzuda), which we have rendered "straits" in the first clause, often signifies "stronghold," or "place of defence." Its primary meaning, however, is "strait," "narrow," &c., and because the strongholds were in narrow, and strait, and dark places, as caves and clefts of the rocks, it shares in the name "Metzudah." Figuratively, therefore, it denotes "straits," as distress, anguish, persecution, &c.; but it never denotes either "snares" or "net," as translators have rendered it. מִקְקָה (Muqkah), in the second clause, signifies a "deepening, or a hole caused by pressure," as the compressure of the earth, or wrinkles made in it by the wheels of a loaded waggon (see Amos ii. 13); so the loins of man (considered in those days as the seat of strength) shrivel and wrinkle by the oppression and terror of the enemy.

† רֵוַיָּה (Revayah), when used in a metaphorical sense, signifies both an abundance of peace and an everlasting supply and enjoyment of everything besides.

15. Burnt-offerings of fatlings will I bring up unto thee,
 Along with fragrant incense :*
 I will sacrifice rams, bullocks, and goats, Selah, always.

Verse 10. "For thou hast proved us, O God." The grateful Psalmist looks back to the mysterious process through which the Almighty had led him from the time he was anointed king by Samuel until now, when he was standing at the altar of burnt-offerings, and solemnly performing his vows, and sees that altogether it had worked for the good of his soul. He therefore says, "For thou hast proved us (him and his men chiefly, and in a certain sense the whole nation of Israel), O God; Thou hast purified us as silver is purified." Compare Isa. xlviii. 10. He then proceeds to describe the nature of the process he had come through: "Thou hast brought us into straits," *i.e.*, into distress, into trials and calamities; "Thou hast put a shrivelling into our loins," *i.e.*, fear and trembling, weakness and fainting, hunger and thirst, caused our loins to shrivel. He then describes the instrument which the Lord had been pleased to employ in that refining process, and which was none other than wicked Saul, the deadly enemy of the saint now standing at the altar of God, and the scourge of the whole nation of Israel. "Thou hast made a man (Saul) to ride upon our heads." Misapprehension of the subject and occasion of this Psalm has led the translators to render the singular noun **אִנּוֹשׁ** (Enosh) in the plural "men."

The word "Enosh" is chosen here, because it is significant of "the poor man," "the miserable man," Saul. (Compare our Introduction to this book, page 7, top). "We were brought," or we came "through fire and water (a most expressive figure for misery and persecution), but Thou hast brought us forth to affluence and tranquillity." The consequence of all is, that David must now pay his vow which he vowed in these times of distress. (See Psalm lvi., in this book Ps. xii. 12, 13, and exposition.)

He proceeds in the fourth part to make his public confession to the Lord before the saints.

PART FOURTH.

16. O come and hear, all ye that fear God,
 And I will relate what He hath done for my soul.
 17. When I called upon Him with my mouth,
 A song of exaltation was under my tongue.
 18. Had I regarded iniquity in my heart,
 Surely the Lord would not have heard me;

* The wrong pointing of this verse has led the translators into the great absurdity of saying "with incense of rams," but the verse should be divided thus, "Burnt-offerings of fatlings will I bring up (*i.e.* upon the altar), unto thee **עִם־קֶטֶרֶת** (Im Ketoreth), along with fragrant incense;" then follows the second division of the verse, **אֵילִים אֶעֱשֶׂה** (Eylim Eeseh) "Rams will I sacrifice," or "I will sacrifice rams, **בָּקָר** (Bakar) bullocks," &c. That the burnt-offerings brought at the performance of a vow were always accompanied with **מִנְחָה** (Mincha) "meat-offering," with oil, and wine, and frankincense, see Num. xv. 1—12; and that the meat-offering was always accompanied with frankincense, see Lev. ii. 1, 2, &c.

19. But, behold, God hath heard me ;
 He hath attended to the voice of my prayer.
 20. Blessed be God, who had not removed
 Either my prayer, or his grace from me.

The great lesson which David intends here to teach those who fear God, is, how they should behave when the Lord visits them with chastisement, in order to prove and purify them, as he had done to the Psalmist himself. See verse 10. Accordingly, in the 16th verse, he calls the God-fearing Israelites to listen to his relation of what Jehovah has done for his soul. He tells them in the three subsequent verses, that when he cried to the Lord in time of distress, his prayers were interwoven with praise and adoring songs, in which Jehovah could not but delight, and which is the most beneficial exercise for the saints : And that it could not have been a special besetting sin of his for which Jehovah had made him suffer, for he had been conscious of none—he had regarded no known iniquity in his heart before his sufferings, and had not to abandon such after them. Consequently he uses the argument further, that it could not have been a sin of which he was unconscious, but which Jehovah had seen and punished him for ; for if so, the Lord would not have heard his prayer nor delivered him. Seeing therefore that he had heard him, and had saved and exalted him, all his sufferings must have been intended to prove, and purify, and sanctify him, as well as to promote the glory of God in those sweet and lofty strains of adoration and praise which were mingled with his supplications and prayers. (The reader will find farther satisfaction by comparing this part of the Psalm with Psalm xxx., in this book xlviii. 6—10, and exposition.) The last verse of this noble Psalm has been generally misunderstood. It contains the happy and brilliant result of the whole of David's experience related in the last two parts. His experience taught him, that as long as a child of God cherishes the spirit of prayer and supplication, he has nothing to fear in time of trouble, for he will speedily be delivered, and his sufferings will prove to have been the chastisements of a loving and merciful Father—that a man is never so miserable as when the "Spirit of grace and supplication" is taken from him, for then there is something wrong, some abominable pollution, some accursed thing cleaving to his soul, on account of which the holy Jehovah, who cannot look upon iniquity, has no delight in his prayer. David therefore says, "Blessed be God, who hath not removed either my prayer or his grace from me." Where there is grace sufficient, there also is prayer ; and in the soul where prayer abounds there is grace, and a sure hope of deliverance and salvation. O Jehovah ! deprive us of anything but of our prayer and of thy grace. Amen.

The next Psalm is that which follows in the common arrangement, and, as we mentioned in the Introduction to these four Psalms, forms, as it were, an appendix to the whole. It is a national song of praise for spiritual and temporal prosperity ; but it also contains a prophecy regarding the conversion of all nations to God, as we find in the first two parts of the foregoing Psalm,—and as a song of praise, it is of a general character. The Psalm is divided into three parts by two Selahs.

PS. LXVII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXII.

"Lamnatzeach," Dedicated "To the Chief Cause of all Events."

"Binginoth," To be performed with Music.

A VOCAL SONG OF PRAISE.*

PART FIRST.

1. May God be gracious unto us, and bless us :
May He cause his countenance to shine among us, Selah, for ever.

This verse, which constitutes the first part of this national song of praise, is derived from the benediction prescribed by God to the priests, which they were to pronounce upon the people at the close of the temple services on solemn occasions. (See Numb. vi. 23—27 ; compare also Lev. ix. 23, and about the king blessing the people, 2 Sam. vi. 18 ; but after the order of the priests was restored, the latter pronounced the blessing, 2 Chron. xxx. 27.) Jehovah had now caused his countenance to shine among Israel, from the Shechinah between the Cherubim on Mount Zion ; and for the continuance of such a glorious privilege, the Church prayed in the first verse of this song. This prayer being taken from the benediction mentioned above, God is spoken of in the third person, but in the next verse He is addressed in the second :

PART SECOND.

2. That Thy way may be made known in the earth,
Thy salvation among all the nations.
3. Let the nations praise Thee, O God ;
Let all the nations praise Thee.
4. The people shall be glad, and shout for joy,
For Thou shalt judge the nations with uprightness,
And guide the peoples on earth, Selah, for ever.

From this part we learn that the Psalmist considered the Lord's choice of Israel, as only the beginning of the conversion of the whole world to him-

* This Psalm and the lxvi. have in their titles בִּינְיֹוֹת (Binginoth), which means (as we showed at the end of the Introduction, page 33) that the Psalm was fitted for any sort of music, vocal or instrumental, as well as for any national melody adapted to a song of praise. But these Psalms have also in their titles the additional words מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר (Mizmor Shir), which we have always rendered, "A vocal song of praise." From the contents of both, the reader will see that they were intended for national songs, which the sons and daughters of Israel usually learned by heart, and often repeated. Hence they are styled "vocal songs of praise ;" and the additional word "Binginoth" signifies, that any melody of the usual national songs would fit them, being of a general construction. But at the same time none of these titles excluded the use of instrumental music at the performance of the Psalm in the temple service. The song was generally sung by the bands of vocal musicians, when the instruments were not used, as on Sabbath, on the day of atonement, &c. (see title of Ps. xcii., in this book Ps. xliii., "A vocal song for the Sabbath-day") ; but on other occasions it was seconded by instrumental music.

self; and therefore he puts words into the mouth of the Church to pray her covenant God, that he might cause his countenance so to shine among his people, as that all the nations of the world might see it and become partakers of her glory. We see clearly, too, how this Psalm stands in close connection with the two preceding. The first two parts of the one immediately preceding are occupied with the anticipation of the conversion of all nations, and if we turn to the lxx., where the occasions on which "praise waiteth for God in Zion" are enumerated, then we may consider this Psalm as a grand conclusion to the whole. How sweet and glorious will that praise sound that shall be rendered to Jehovah in Zion (in a spiritual sense), when the "mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills," and when all the "nations shall flow unto it!"

5. Let the nations praise Thee, O God ;
Let all the nations praise Thee.
6. The earth hath given her increase :
God, even our God, shall bless us.
7. God shall bless us,
And all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

Some conclude, very injudiciously, that the first clause of verse 6 indicates that the Psalm was composed, after a rich harvest, as a national thanksgiving; but this is a great mistake. How can we think that a Psalm which is so highly Messianic, and speaks throughout of glorious things to be fulfilled in a distant futurity, but which at the same time contains the few words, "The earth hath given her increase," should be therefore intended as a harvest song of thanksgiving? And what has a rich natural harvest to do with the conversion of the whole world? We are therefore inclined to think that David makes use of that expression in a metaphorical sense. We have seen already the connection of these Psalms, and that whilst the Psalmist rejoices in Jehovah, and surrounds his altar with songs of triumph and joy, laying the burnt-offerings of his performed vow thereon, he exults in the anticipation of the world being one day brought to the knowledge of God, and of the whole human family praising Him in a spiritual Zion. Israel was considered as the first seed which Jehovah had sown in his spiritual field, and as the first fruits of his increase (see Jer. ii. 3); hence whenever there was a revival of religion among them, it was also to be considered as a glorious pledge of the great harvest, the conversion of all nations. Such a revival had taken place in these days of David, and this he regarded as a gracious token of the world's future conversion. This is the idea conveyed under the figure, that "the earth," or "the land (*i.e.* Palestine, for so אֶרֶץ [Eretz] means here) has given her increase,"—Israel the first fruit, revived, and praising God in Zion, a blessed earnest of the salvation of the world, "God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him." The metaphor is taken from Lev. xxvi. 4, 20, where Israel was told that while they continued obedient to God, the earth would yield them her increase, but that it would be withheld when they departed from Him. What the ground or soil was to Israel literally, Israel was to the nations of the world in a spiritual sense. So it is with the Church of God even at

present; her slumbering is not only dangerous to herself, but it is as the shadow of death to the hundreds of millions of unconverted heathen. But when she "yields her increase," when revived and refreshed, she awakes to praise Jehovah in Zion, then will she be a crown of glory and a royal diadem in his hand, and her salvation and glory will shed a radiant light upon distant regions, so that the "heathen will walk in her light, and princes in the brightness of her shining rays."

We proceed now to consider two other productions of David which seem to belong to the happy period of the performance of his vows, and which give us a clearer insight into his spiritual joy and exultation in Jehovah his God. Psalms xxvi. and xxvii. contain a perfect description of the benefits which his soul derived from the tabernacle and its solemn services—they show us the fervency with which an Old Testament saint was devoted to the holy types of Jehovah's sanctuary, and how that divinely-appointed schoolmaster led them to Christ, the end of the law for righteousness.

PS. XXVI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXIII.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

1. Direct me,* O Jehovah; for I have walked in mine integrity :
And in Jehovah have I put my confidence,—
O may I never slide !
2. Examine me, O Jehovah, and prove me ;
Purify my reins and my heart,

* The verb שָׁפַט (Shaphat), which is invariably rendered "to judge," has a very extensive meaning. Its primary significations are "to erect, to set upright, to direct, to order, to determine, to regulate," &c. For instance, in Judg. iii. we are told, that when Israel was in great distress, the Lord raised up unto them a deliverer in Othniel, the brother of Caleb; and in verse 10 we read, "And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, יִרְשָׁט אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל, and he directed, or regulated Israel (*i.e.* the army for war), and went out to war," &c. Now the reader will see how absurdly the word שָׁפַט (Shaphat) is there rendered "to judge," for it was not a judge Israel stood in need of, but one who should regulate them, and lead them against the enemy. The same meaning it has in 1 Sam. viii. 20, and in many other places its different meanings would restore the passages to their original sense. The significations of "to judge, to dispense justice, to advocate, to discern, to punish, to correct," &c., are derivative from the former, as it is obvious that to dispense justice is to direct matters, to arrange and regulate affairs, to set upright the thing that was disordered, &c. In the Psalm before us David pleads for Jehovah's direction and guidance, for the continuance of his favour, and that he would preserve him in peace and tranquillity beside his tabernacle and altar, that he might praise him all the days of his life. He gives, as the ground of his prayer, his pure moral character—his determination to be separate from sinners and their wicked deeds—to wash his hands in innocency—to cleanse his soul from every secret sin—to surround Jehovah's altar with the voice of thanksgivings, and to praise him while he lives. Hence he opens the Psalm with the plea, "Direct me, O Jehovah, for I have walked in mine integrity," &c. Dr Hengstenberg spends pages endeavouring to prove that this Psalm was composed by David when he was in great misery. But we cannot conceive a greater misery than to undertake an exposition of the Psalms, and to be entirely ignorant not only of their spirit, but even of their letter. He refutes the opinion of another German writer, a Dr Ewald, who concludes that this Psalm was composed on the occasion of a *pestilence*; and then he collects some similes which occur in this Psalm, and some which occur in others, wishing thus to couple Psalms together which have no mutual connection, and the times of composition of which were divided by dozens of years. Such modes of exposition are the pestilence in which Ewald thinks that our Psalm was composed; but we are sure that David wrote it in peace and spiritual felicity, and it is full of praise, prayer, joy, and happiness, and devout confidence in God.

3. For thy tender mercy is before mine eyes ;
And I have walked according to thy faithfulness.

When the child of God approaches the throne of the righteous Jehovah as a petitioner, he must consider two things. 1st, Whether some besetting sin, or some sin hastily committed, do not cleave to his soul, and if so, it becomes him to humble himself in the dust on account of it, and implore forgiveness, before he comes to present his petition for some special favour; and 2d, Whether the communication of heaven's grace be open to him at the time, *i.e.* if he have tokens that the fountain of Jehovah's mercy and grace continues to flow into his soul in an uninterrupted course. If this be not the case, then he must first endeavour to secure an audience before coming with his petition. This is what David indicates in the 3d verse, when he says, that "Jehovah's tender mercy was before his eyes," *i.e.* the communications of his grace were flowing unto him in streams; and also that he was conscious of "having walked according to God's faithfulness," *i.e.* of having preserved himself pure from sin—of having kept his feet in the path of righteousness, and his heart and soul in the sanctuary. Hence he ventured to come before God with the petition contained in the first two verses, "Direct me, O Jehovah," *i.e.* continue thy loving-kindness unto me, lead and guide me in all thy ways, as thou hast done hitherto when I have been able "to walk in mine integrity, and to put my confidence in Thee." But in the second verse, he prays God to do for him what he could not do for himself in the way of sanctification, "Examine me, O Jehovah, and prove me;" *i.e.* Thou who knowest the heart of man and triest his reins, and penetratest into the deepest recesses of his thoughts, examine thou me, see if there is not something still wrong with me, if there is not still a crooked way in me, and "purify my reins and my heart;" *i.e.* make thou me worthy to stand before thee—make thou me worthy of thy light and thy truth to lead and guide me in all thy ways.

David then enumerates the things from which he kept himself clean, in order to obtain Jehovah's special favour; and tells also of his devotion to his praise. Hence his love to the tabernacle and altar, the continuance of the enjoyment of which privileges now, and future salvation and glory, are the germ of this Psalm.

4. I never associated with lying mortals,
And with dissemblers I had no intercourse.
5. I abhorred the assembly of malefactors;
Hence I have not associated with wicked men.
6. I will wash mine hands in innocency,
And then will I compass thine altar, O Jehovah :*

* There are two expressions in this verse which are uncommon, and require explanation. The priests could not approach the altar before having washed their hands in the brazen laver, which stood between the altar and the holy place. (See Exod. xxx. 17–21, xl., 30–32.) This David uses in a figure, saying, that before he would come to offer sacrifices upon the altar, he would wash his hands in innocency, *i.e.* examine himself thoroughly whether some sin, some unrighteous thought or deed, might not be sticking to his soul, and if he were innocent from secret sin. Certainly this is the best washing of hands. (Compare Matth. v. 24, 25.) The second expression, viz. "surrounding, or compassing the altar," is taken from the fact, that not only had the priests often to go round about the altar when they were to sprinkle on its horns the blood of different sacrifices (see Lev. iv. 18, 25, 34, xvi.

7. To make resound the voice of thanksgivings,
And to publish all thy works of wonder.
8. O Jehovah, I ever love the habitation of thy house,
And the dwelling-place of thy glory.
9. Thou wilt not gather my soul along with those of sinners,
Nor my life along with those of bloody men :
10. In whose hands are abominable crimes,
And whose right hand is full of bribes.
11. But as for me, I will walk on in mine integrity :
O redeem me, and be gracious unto me.
12. My foot standeth in the path of uprightness ;
In the congregations will I praise Jehovah.

We see how the devoted David brought himself as a living sacrifice to the altar of Jehovah's mercy and grace. He had tasted and seen that all the enjoyments of this world, all the treasures of vanity, and the pleasures of wicked men, are but like chaff before the wind when compared with the holy and serene delights and spiritual enjoyments of the child of God, and the experience of the Divine loving kindness. He therefore prays in this Psalm, that as the Lord had enabled him hitherto to abhor wickedness, and to love righteousness, piety, and justice, so he might continue to keep him separate from wicked men and their wicked deeds, and to preserve him holy and devoted beside his tabernacle, that he might praise his great name. When he says (verse 6) that he would wash his hands in innocency, and thus surround Jehovah's altar, he immediately tells us the holy purpose he had in doing so, viz., "to make resound the voice of thanksgiving, and to publish all thy works of wonder." To sing, to pray, to extol, and adore Jehovah was the food of his soul. But it was not only in time that he endeavoured to procure for himself the nearness of his God, and the privilege of praising him. He pleads in the succeeding verses, that as he

18, &c.); but when the king brought sacrifices, he led the sacrifice to the east side of the altar, gave it there into the hand of the officiating priest, and did not turn back the same way, but came round about the altar to the north side, where he remained until it was offered. But on solemn occasions the musical Levites surrounded the altar seven times with songs of praise and thanksgiving, while the smoke of the whole burnt-offerings ascended on high as a sweet-smelling savour to Jehovah. On such occasions the sweet Psalmist of Israel went before all the bands of musical Levites, with the harp in his hand, surrounding the altar of God with praise and songs of triumph and joy, which he had right to do as king.

Dr Hengstenberg's remarks on this verse, especially on the second clause of it, are alike false and absurd. "The second clause," says he, "is rendered by Gesenius: 'I go round about thy altar.' But סָבִיב (Sovev) never occurs in the sense of, 'to go round.' And besides, we know nothing about going round the altar;" and Dr H. therefore prefers to render the word (Sovev) by "hold fast," and in our passage he would read, "I hold fast by thine altar." But nothing can be more ridiculous than for a man to introduce Hebrew words into his book, the meaning of which he does not know. Let us examine if Sovev does never signify "to go round," as Dr H. maintains, and if it will be better rendered by "hold fast." Now, the same word occurs seven times in Job vi., and always means "to go round about," viz. the walls of Jericho; but Dr H. will say it never means "to go round." What, then, does it mean? It means "to hold fast" seven times the walls of Jericho." So he must "hold fast" the wind in Eccles. i. 6, instead of allowing it to turn round, for there the same word occurs four times. Or what would he say to 1 Kings xviii. 35, "And the water ran סָבִיב (Saviv) round about the altar." Will he read it, "And the water ran hold fast the altar?" Other passages to the same effect might be adduced, but as examples the above will suffice.

had ever loved the dwelling place of Jehovah's glory here, so might his soul dwell with Him in glory eternal; "Thou wilt not gather my soul along with those of sinners," *i.e.*, thou wilt not appoint my lot in eternity along with those whom I hated for thy name's sake in time, and with whom I had therefore no communion nor association (see verses 4 and 5). **אָסוֹף**

(Asoph) means "to collect," "to gather," and is often used for gathering in the crops at harvest, the produce of the seed which the husbandman casts in the bosom of the soil. Hence it is most appropriately used for the gathering in of souls by Jehovah the great husbandman, who sowed them in this world for the promotion of his glory, and who expects to gather them in, improved, redeemed, sanctified, and glorified. Though "Asoph" is often used also for the gathering of wicked men, yet a difference in the contexts is always observable. The souls of both are gathered in alike by him who sowed them, as the chaff is gathered in along with the grain; and as the latter is afterwards separated from the former, so at the common in-gathering at death the souls of the righteous and the wicked are separated—the former to dwell for ever in God's gracious presence in heaven, with the innumerable companies of angels; and the latter to be consigned to their own place, and to their own community, where the glory of Jehovah's justice will be manifested in their everlasting destruction. For instance, Abraham, the friend of God, "died in a good old age,

. . . . **וַיֵּאָסֶף אֱלֹהֵם** (Vayeaseph El Amov), "and he was gathered to his community" (the primary meaning of **עָם** [Am], is "community," *i.e.*, a certain collection of a certain class of people), which means "to the community of the righteous in the regions of bliss, to the souls of the just made perfect." So when the wicked dies he is also gathered to his community in the place of woe. Therefore David says, "Thou wilt not *gather* my soul along with those of sinners, . . . in whose hands are abominable crimes," &c., *i.e.*, we have not belonged to this community in time, nor shall we do so in eternity—we have not belonged to this tabernacle in time, nor shall we dwell under the same roof in eternity. The reason follows, "I will walk in mine integrity: O redeem me, and be gracious unto me. . . . In the congregations will I praise Jehovah," *i.e.*, in the assemblies of saints in time, and along with the general assembly in heaven throughout eternity.*

We now come to the still sweeter, more magnificent, and sublime Psalm, the xxvii.

* Hengstenberg denies the reference to eternity in verse 9. According to him, David only means to say that he should not die the death of the sinner, *i.e.*, that his lot in life and death should not be with the sinners. Now, though we do not presume to ascertain that Dr H. denies immortality, but supposing he did, would it make any difference to him whether he died of cholera, or in battle, or in any other way, and was buried among hundreds of sinners? If not, what was it then that made David so anxious that his soul should not be gathered in with sinners?

18. XXVII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXIV.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

PART FIRST.

1. Jehovah is my light, and my salvation,
Whom shall I fear ?
Jehovah is the mighty Defence of my life,
Of whom shall I be afraid ?
2. When the evil doers advanced against me—
When mine adversaries and mine enemies came near me,
To eat my flesh ; they stumbled, and they fell.
3. Though a host should encamp against me,
My heart shall not be afraid ;
Though war should rise against me,
In these do I put my confidence.

Man was not created for fear and trembling—he who was made “in the image of God,” had nothing to dread. Within the precincts of Paradise where he was placed, there was no object to terrify him. He had only to adore his holy Creator, who often visited him “in the cool of the day.” Fear only became known to him after he had sinned, when he saw his nakedness and hid himself among the trees of the garden. His children therefore, fallen in him, born in sin and iniquity, are acquainted with fear and visited with trembling ; not only have they to fear Satan and sin, judgment and everlasting punishment, but also the malice and guile of their fellow-men. They have to fear, trouble and misery, trials and temptations, persecutions and calamities, and as they walk in the dark wilderness of this world, they have to fear lest they stumble at the many snares, and nets, and stumbling blocks which lie in their way. But blessed be the merciful Jehovah, who in his infinite compassion has prepared an antidote to that great evil. He has taught the poor children of men, that to fear and serve him is the surest remedy against every other fear—to love him is the best security against all hatred and danger to which they may be exposed. But how can a sinful, polluted, and trembling being love and confide in such a holy Being, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity ? Ah ! he says, fear not, thou worm Jacob, I have prepared salvation for thee ; with me is pardon, with me is love, deliverance, security, happiness, light, and eternal glory for thee.

The holy Psalmist found out that celestial treasure, and when his heart overflowed with the sweetness of that mystery—when his soul was exalted, in Jehovah his God and Saviour—when he contemplated in the tabernacle of the Shechinah and Cherubim, His inexpressible loving-kindness in granting to the fallen children of man such tokens of His good pleasure towards them, he exclaims in triumphant joy, “Jehovah is my light and my salvation, Whom shall I fear ?” If he who called the light into existence is my light, what shadows of darkness, of trouble, or of temptation can obscure my way ? If the Omnipotent Jehovah determined my salvation, my deliverance, and my glory, whom shall I fear ? What can Satan,

sin, the world, principalities, and powers of darkness, yea, even the gates of hell, do unto me? If Jehovah is the **מַעְזַר-חַיַּי** (Maoz Chayai) "the strong defence," or mighty fortress of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" Who shall take my life from me if Jehovah guards it and keeps it in his bosom? Who shall prevail against me if Omnipotence is with and for me? The Psalmist then proceeds to show in the 2d verse, that what he stated was confirmed by real experience, for evil doers, adversaries, and enemies came against him to eat up his flesh—Saul and a numerous faction of wicked men conspired against him, and were determined to feed on his destruction, like lions on their prey; but when all human assistance would have been of no avail, Jehovah, "his light and his salvation," gave light to him and deliverance, while his enemies stumbled and fell never to rise again. His faith being fortified so mightily—having received such infallible tokens of Jehovah's power and faithfulness, to confirm him in his faith—he boldly exclaims in verse 4, Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; Though war should rise against me **בְּזוֹת** (Bezoth), "In these," *i.e.* in the knowledge and faith that Thou art "my light and my salvation," and in the tokens that thou hast already showed me for the confirmation of it, **אֲנִי בְרִיטָה** (Ani Boteach), "do I put my confidence," or, "By those tokens am I made secure." That **זוֹת** (Zoth) is constructed sometimes in the plural, see Deut. vi. 1, "These are the commandments," &c., also verse 25, &c., so in our passage, it shows back to the preceding statements, "In these," *i.e.* in thy light, in thy salvation, and in the tokens thou hast showed me already, "I put my confidence."

Having seen the mighty foundation which David laid in this lovely Psalm, let us now consider the structure he reared on it:

4. One thing have I requested of Jehovah,
After which I still earnestly seek :
That I may dwell in Jehovah's house,
All the days of my life ;
To contemplate Jehovah's splendour,
And to make inquiry in his temple.
5. For he shall conceal me in his pavilion in the evil day ;
He shall hide me in the secret place of his tabernacle :
He shall lift me up on high into a rock.
6. Even now, he will exalt my head
Above mine enemies round about me ;
That I may offer in his tabernacle sacrifices,
With shouts of triumph and joy,—
Unto Jehovah will I chaunt, and sing praise.

If ever a holy man was commissioned by his Divine Teacher, the Spirit, to write down something of the blessed experience he was permitted to enjoy when caught up into the temple of the Lord of Hosts, to behold things which are unutterable, then we think to find it in the three verses of the holy Oracle before us. Could we but for a moment strip our souls of the burden of clay, and follow the holy Psalmist into the mysterious regions of entranced vision—into that awful sphere of splendour, and holiness, and

purity, and bliss, and majesty, and brilliancy of uncreated light in the midst of cloud and terror, where the Ancient of Days and the Son of man sit on the sapphire throne in brightness and glory, under the terrible crystal pavilion, surrounded by innumerable companies of angels, and adored by trembling seraphs; then, and then only, would we understand what he means by contemplating Jehovah's splendour, by "making inquiry in his temple," by "being concealed under his pavilion," and by "being hid in the secret place of his tabernacle." That David, in verses 4 and 5, speaks of things beyond time and the material tabernacle, though he takes some figures from the latter, can, we think, be put beyond all doubt. 1st, His desire expressed in verse 4, to "dwell in Jehovah's house all the days of his life," is similar to that expressed in Ps. lxi., in this book Ps. lix. 4, where he says, "I shall dwell in thy tabernacle, עֹלָמִים (Olamim), "throughout all eternity;* I will take shelter under the covert," or, "the secret place of thy wings for ever," &c. (see our exposition there.) The similarity between the two passages shows that it was the same request—the same desire; and that in it he looked beyond time into endless eternity. 2d, The reason given by David for his longing desire to dwell for ever in Jehovah's sanctuary, is distinctly twofold; first, לַחֲזוֹת בְּנֹעַם יְהוָה (Lachzoth benoam Jehovah), "to contemplate Jehovah's splendour," or, "to behold his beauty," or, "to gaze at his glory;" but all these three translations do not express the grandeur of the original, for לַחֲזוֹת (Lachzoth) here by no means signifies a merely natural beholding or contemplating, but a prophetic visionary seeing. This is farther evident from the following expression, וּלְבַקֵּךְ בְּהִיכָלֹו (Ulvaker be-hechalo), "And to make inquiry in his temple," or, "to make discoveries." Now, whatever we understand David to mean by the searching, examining, or making inquiry (as the word "Bicker" means), one thing is certain, that it must refer to revelations regarding future things, heavenly discoveries, eternal revelations. Hence the second reason given in verse 5, כִּי יִסְתָּכֶנִּי בְּסֻכֵּה (Ki Yitzpeneni Besukoh), "For he shall conceal me in his pavilion, or shall hide me under his covert, בְּיוֹם רָעָה (Beyem raah) in the evil day, or in the calamitous day (which day we perceive to mean the great day of judgment). He shall hide me in the secret place of his tabernacle, בְּצִוּר יֶרֶמְמִינִי (Betzur Yerommeni): he shall lift me up on high into a rock" (this figure is taken from Exod. xxxiii. 20—23.) Now, who does not see, that though the figures in this verse are taken from things in time,

* The word עֹלָמִים (Olamim) is the most expressive term of "endless eternity," the worlds, or ages, which follow one after another without ever coming to an end; especially when it stands alone it is never used to denote a time which can ever have an end. (See Isa. xli. 17; Dan. ix. 24.) When it refers to past eternity, or rather to a portion of bygone eternity, then it is accompanied by another word to denote the portion, but the word "Olamim" stands to denote eternity, as in Isa. li. 9, דִּרְיֹת עֹלָמִים (Doroth Olamim) means "generations or ages of past eternity;" Ps. lxxvii. 5, שְׁנוֹת עֹלָמִים (Shenoth Olamim), "years of past eternity," i.e. years of bygone time, which time has no end; but the years are a portion of that endless time. So when the word Olamim stands by itself, it always signifies endless eternity, as in the same quoted Psalm, verse 7, "Will my God for ever, or for all eternity, throw me away?" &c.

yet that the being concealed under Jehovah's pavilion, and hid in the secret place of his tabernacle, must refer to the soul, to heaven, and to eternity? otherwise, the figures employed would not only be too strong, but impossible. But lastly, that verses 4 and 5 refer to eternity is evident from verse 6, which begins with *וְעַתָּה* (*Veatah*), which must mean, "and even now," i.e., even in time, before the eternal and glorious things can come in heaven; "Even now *יְרֹם רוֹשִׁי* (*Yarum Roshi*), he will exalt my head;" not only will he glorify me in eternity, but even now in time he shall exalt my head above mine enemies round about me;" and for what purpose would Jehovah do this? "That I may offer in his tabernacle sacrifices with shouts of triumph and joy." David knew well that Jehovah delighteth in praise; and who was more ready among the children of men for that glorious and heavenly service than he? "Unto Jehovah will I chaunt and sing praise;" O Jehovah, thou hast pleasure in hearing my songs at thine altar when I offer sacrifices of joy; and what could be a greater delight to my soul than to serve such a great and glorious Being, than to praise, and adore, and extol thee—to embrace thy footstool in holy and devoted love—with trembling, but reverential, holy, and seraphic fear—in that deep though silent devotion, which ties the soul with inconceivable bands of love to the wheels of Jehovah's chariot of glory, and carries her along through the celestial regions of brightness and splendour, of endless happiness, and unutterable Divine majesty.

We come now to the second part of this Psalm, which stands by itself, and contains an ardent prayer of David for the continuance of God's grace to him.

PART SECOND.

7. Hear my voice, O Jehovah, when I cry aloud;
And be gracious unto me, and answer me.
8. In thy stead, my heart hath proclaimed, Seek ye my face:
Thy face, O Jehovah, I will seek.*

* Many different constructions and meanings have been suggested by commentators of this very difficult verse. But we think that every difficulty is removed when we remember David's recent actions, how he gathered the nation and exhorted them to turn from evil, and to awaken from the slumber and indifference in which they had lain buried, as it were, all the time of Saul's violent government. So we read, 1 Chron. xiii. 2, 3, "And David said unto the congregation of Israel, If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the Lord our God (or, 'and if the matter have issued from the Lord,' i.e. the impulse to erect the tabernacle services), let us send abroad unto our brethren everywhere . . . also to the priests and Levites . . . and let us bring again the Ark of our God to us; for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul," &c. (See also chap. xv. 12, 13.) Here we see how David rose up in God's name, driven by the impulse of the Spirit, and said unto Israel in His name, "Seek ye my face," or "search ye for my presence." After he had expressed his desire in verse 4, that he might dwell in Jehovah's house all the days of his life, he says in verse 8, *לִּי אֶפְתָּח לִבִּי* (*Lecha Amar Libi*), "In thy stead," or for thee, i.e. in thy name, "my heart (expressive of the impulse within his heart) hath proclaimed (i.e. to Israel), Seek ye my face," or search ye for my presence. He then tells his own resolution to seek Jehovah's face with all his heart: "Thy face, O Jehovah, I will seek." Like Joshua, so did David offer the choice to the people of Israel, and the opportunity to search for Jehovah's presence—to seek his face in the holy place before the cherubim; but like Joshua, he could not compel them, but said with the former, "But I and my house will serve Jehovah." This we take to be the subject proposed in this verse, and therefore David prays accordingly, that as he had resolved to seek Jehovah's face, so might Jehovah never hide his face from him when he should call on him in time of trouble.

9. Hide not thy face from me ;
Turn not away in anger thy servant :
Thou hast been my help, abandon me not ;
And forsake me not, O God of my salvation.
10. Though my father and my mother have forsaken me,
Jehovah will surely take me up.*
11. Teach me thy way, O Jehovah,
And lead me in a straight path,
Because of those who look out for my hurt.
12. Give me not over to the will of mine adversaries ;
When false witnesses are risen against me,
And such as stimulate to violence.
13. O had I not believed to enjoy the rich bounties of
Jehovah in the land of life ! . . .
14. Wait on Jehovah : be of good courage :
He will also strengthen thine heart :
Wait thou therefore on Jehovah.

As the Psalmist had expressed his resolution in the former part of this Psalm, to chaunt and to sing praises to Jehovah, and stated his longing desire to dwell in Jehovah's house in time and in eternity, he next embraces the opportunity to offer up an ardent prayer that God would confirm his resolution by extending to him his mercy and grace, and never leave him in time of trouble. In verses 8 and 9 he represents his recent transaction in bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Zion—in re-establishing the order of the priesthood—in consecrating the Levites for their service, and to make sweet melody unto Jehovah—in erecting the altar both on Zion before the Ark, and at Gibeon, where Moses' tabernacle stood—in calling

* The Hebrew text here contains a clear indication that David had lost his parents at this time by death. Some commentators understand it as a figure, *i.e.* that his friends had abandoned him in time of distress; but this is erroneous, and founded on the false conjecture that this Psalm was written at a period when he was in great distress from surrounding enemies. But if they had studied the spirit and arrangement of his Psalms more carefully, they would have discovered this difference, *viz.*, that a Psalm composed in distress opens always in plaintive strains, and with exclamations of woe (see Psalms iii., v., vi., x., xiii., xxii., xxviii., xxxviii., xlii., xliii., li., lv., lvi., lvii., lix., lxiv., lxix., lxxvii., lxxix., lxxx., lxxxiii., lxxxvi., lxxxviii., cii., cix., cxi.—cxliii., &c.) Though the most of these Psalms, indeed, end in triumph and joy produced by the consolation which the Psalmist found in Jehovah's faithfulness, yet it is to be observed that all begin with complaints, and cries for mercy. On the other hand, when a Psalm commences in tones of triumph, it may be concluded, that even when complaints are found in the middle or towards the close of it, it is only the language of prayer; for the children of God have still much need to supplicate even on the occasions of their chiefest joy; but the Psalm notwithstanding remains a triumphant one. It is wrong, therefore, to conclude that because David mixes prayer with praise, such Psalms must necessarily have been composed in time of distress.

Our Psalm is one of triumph and joy, though it is made complete by prayer; and in verse 10, David says, כִּי אָבִי וְאִמִּי עָזָבוּנִי (Ki avi veimi azavuni), "Though my father and my mother have forsaken me," *i.e.* by death. The Jews have a tradition that David's parents, who were entrusted to the king of Moab (1 Sam. xxii. 3—4), were miserably destroyed by the latter as soon as he heard that David was made king. (out of deadly hatred and jealousy of Israel), and hence the war between Israel and Moab (2 Sam. viii. 2.) But whatever may be thought of this tradition, it is a fact that no mention is made of his parents nor of his brothers, and what became of them—after he was made king; and in this Psalm he says, though his parents have forsaken him, Jehovah is his father, and mother, and friend, and that he would take him up.

upon and exhorting the long slumbering Israelites to renew their covenant with, and to begin earnestly to search for their God, and to seek him in his ordinances; and in having himself resolved firmly, that even though none of Israel should follow the inspired call, he would follow it with his whole heart to search for, or to seek Jehovah's face. He therefore pleads in the 8th verse, that Jehovah would confirm his resolution by turning his face always to him, and never removing it, especially in time of trouble. To this he adds, that Jehovah had already been his help, and that therefore he had the more reason to pray that he might continue to be near and not to abandon him, for he was the God of his salvation. In verse 10 he states, that though father and mother had been removed from him, still in God he had a mighty Friend who would take him up, (literally "gather him;") and as the word אָסַף (Asaph) is employed here, it may include the bringing them again together. (See Judges ii. 10; Gen. xlix. 29.) But after having supplicated Jehovah's guidance and protection from enemies and danger that might rise against him (verses 11 and 12), he exclaims in verse 13, "O had I not believed—had I not been firm in my faith to enjoy the rich bounties of Jehovah in the land of life!" i.e., O, what had become of me ere this! how often would I have sunk in despair! how often would I have erred from the way in time of calamity and distress! how often would I have been dissolved in grief and misery, and buried under the burden of my sufferings and afflictions! O had I not been firmly convinced that all the sufferings of time are nothing when compared with the glory that awaits those who come forth from tribulation! had I not believed that there is a glorious rest prepared for Jehovah's wearied and fainting pilgrims—what, then, had become of me! But the holy Psalmist believed that there is a future glorious recompence for the children of God, and therefore he concludes, "Wait on Jehovah: be of good courage; He will also strengthen thine heart," i.e., he will make his grace sufficient in thy weakness; "Wait thou, therefore, on Jehovah.*"

* The supplement in the common version in verse 13, "I had fainted," is a very happy one. It conveys the true sense of the exclamation, but we think it better and more sublime without it. לֹלֵא (Luleh) means always "had it not been, or were it not so," as Gen. xxxi.

42, "Had not the God of my father Abraham . . . been for me," &c.; Ps. cxv. 1, "Had not Jehovah been on our side," &c. So in our text David exclaims, לֹלֵא דַּחֲמַנִּי (Luleh Heemanti), "O, had I not believed," or had I not been firmly convinced לִירוֹת בִּטְוֵי יְהוָה (Liroth betiv Jehovah), to enjoy Jehovah's riches, or rich bounties" (that liroth betiv means "to enjoy riches," or pleasures, see Eccl. ii. 1, iii. 13, vi. 6; Jer. xxix. 32, &c.); and where is it that the Psalmist expected to enjoy these hope-animating and glorious rich bounties of Jehovah? It is בְּאֶרֶץ חַיִּים (Beeretz Chayim) "in the land of life." Though חַיִּים (Chayim) is often significant of temporal, it must also include life eternal, from the fact that God is called אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים (Elohim Chayim), "the living God;" and we should hope that no Christian can read and understand this Psalm without seeing that David's expectation and hope are expressed clearly and unmistakably in the life to come, and in the peace and joy that remain for the people of God beyond the grave. But let us hear what vile German rationalism says, "The reference revived by Clause and Stier to the 'life to come,' has been completely set aside by Muis." "It is assuredly in this life . . . that the Psalmist hopes to see the goodness of the Lord." "The writers of the Psalms are far removed from that resignation which gives up to the ungodly everything on this side of the grave, &c." Hengstenberg on the Psalms, vol. i. p. 164. Christian reader, can it be necessary to warn you against such cool, unblushing, sneering infidelity as this—against falling into such a snare as is here deliberately laid?

Before we take up other two series of Psalms which David must have composed about this same period for the temple services, we shall consider two which seem likewise to have been composed soon after the priestly and Levitical order was re-established, and the ordinances of the law begun to be observed on Zion and at Gibeon. Indeed it matters little as to the time when those Psalms were composed, which either contain the praise of God, and were intended to be sung by the musical Levites in the tabernacle, or which address solemn warnings to the people, seeing that even although their dates could be exactly ascertained, the subjects of them would not be thereby at all affected, because they have nothing to do with the history. Still the two Psalms which we are now to take up seem to have been composed by David for the sole purpose of showing to Israel that though they were now possessed of full privileges, and could resort at all times to the altar and to the priests officiating there, yet they were not to suppose that they could on that account indulge in sin, and depend on the sacrificial atonement made by the priest. He therefore endeavours to impress upon them, that unless they paid regard to personal piety and purity—that unless their moral character was such as Jehovah would approve, they could expect nothing from their privileges or sacrifices on Mount Zion. These doctrines and warnings are contained in Psalms xv. and l., as we shall see successively.

PS. XV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXV.

A SONG OR PSALM OF DAVID.

1. O Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle?—
Who shall repose on thy holy mountain?

The Psalmist opens this solemn ode with the name of Jehovah, not as if he intended to put the question to Jehovah himself, or as if he would indicate that the question is so hard as that an answer could only be given in a special revelation from God—for the answer can easily be gathered from His revealed laws and will—but as the matter concerned none but the covenant God, whose worship had been recently restored, and whose ark and altar had been established on Mount Zion, and for whose covenant people the lesson in this Psalm was intended,—therefore he opens it with the name of that God for worshipping whom it was his chief design to prepare the hearts of Israel. He calls, as it were, Jehovah to witness, that the doctrine to be imparted to his children was in accordance with his sovereign will. He then puts the question, “Who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle?” The word יָגוּר (Yagur) has different significations; sometimes it means to dwell constantly, and sometimes, to sojourn but for a short time in a place as a guest. It always implies that the individual is גֵּר (Ger) “a stranger, a guest.”

The saints have called themselves “strangers and sojourners with God” (1 Chron. xxix. 15, &c.), because they have lost all claim in their first parents, and all they enjoy is of free grace, and they are permitted in time and eternity to take shelter under Jehovah’s wings, because his tender mercy allowed them the use of his territory. But as even a stranger may be permitted to become a constant indweller in any place, though he may still be

known by the term "stranger," so the word "Yagur" is sometimes used to denote the constant dwelling of a stranger in a certain place; and it is also often used to denote an eternal residence, as the saints in heaven, though they came there as strangers without any claim or merit of their own. (Ps. lxi. 4, &c.; so it is spoken of eternal punishment, Isa. xxxiii. 14.) But sometimes it means "sojourning for a short time as a guest," so that in our Psalm it strictly signifies, who shall be a proper guest in thy tabernacle? whose visit there wilt thou welcome? The question is repeated, "Who shall repose, or rest on thy holy mountain?" The verb נָשָׁן (Shachan) likewise varies in its meaning as the former word, and is oftener used to denote the rest or repose that a weary traveller takes in a tent; and hence the figure is the more sublime, Who shall be a welcomed guest in Jehovah's tabernacle? Who shall find repose for his weary soul on Jehovah's holy mountain? Are all welcome there who belong to the descendants of Abraham? Can every one find comfort and consolation there who comes with a lamb for the altar, and a bundle of fruit and flour for the priests? Is every one a true worshipper of Jehovah who attends regularly to the ceremonial law, and follows the multitude on the solemn feasts? Let us hear the answer given by the Psalmist:

2. He that walketh uprightly and performeth righteousness,
And ordereth the truth in his heart.*
3. Upon whose tongue there is no slander:
Who did no evil to his neighbour,
And who carried no reproach upon his relation.†
4. In whose eyes the vile person is contemned;
But who honoureth those that fear Jehovah:
He who, when he sweareth to his own hurt, exchangeth it not.‡

* The very comprehensive meaning of the root דָּבַר (Davar) has been often misunderstood, and hence often mistranslated. For instance, what sense is there in saying that a good man should "speak truth in his heart?" If it have any meaning at all, it is forced and unnatural. The good man surely should speak the truth openly, and not in his heart alone. But the primary and principal meaning of the verb is, "to put in order, to arrange, to set in a row," &c., &c. Hence the derivative meaning is "to speak," for in speaking we must arrange, or set in order single words into a sentence. But in our verse the word דָּבַר (Davar) has its primary signification "to order, to arrange." The meaning is this, as the heart is the seat of wisdom and moral action (so it is considered throughout the Scriptures), it is therefore the duty of the pious man to arrange, or to order first in his own heart the words which he is about to utter. In so doing, he will be sure never to speak what is false or useless, for if the source be pure and in order, its issues will be the same. Math. v. 8; Luke xxi. 14.

† רָגַל (Regal), at the beginning of this verse, is not a verb, but a noun, and means "slander," or "calumny" (it is a verb in 2 Sam. xix. 27, "And he calumniated thy servant.") גַּל לְשׁוֹן (Al Leshono), "Upon his tongue," is expressive of the readiness of the wicked man to calumniate his brother—the slander is upon his tongue. But the quality of the man described in this Psalm is, that his tongue is pure and free from slander. The next two clauses of this verse are in the past tense, intimating that he had not done "evil to his neighbour," וְעֵרָפָה (Vecherpah), "and reproach לֹא נָשָׂא (Lo Nasha) had not carried, or conveyed (i.e. brought, caused to come), עַל קֵרֹבּוֹ (Al Kerovo) upon his relation," i.e. he did not behave so as to bring shame and reproach upon his relations. Though "Kerovo" is in the singular, still it has the same sense as the plural in the Hebrew, and stands to signify "relations."

‡ נִשְׁבַּע לִהְיֶה (Nishbah Lehareh), in the third clause of this verse, stands in reference to Lev. v. 4, "Or if a soul swear, pronouncing with his lips (i.e. by an oath) either to his hurt

6. He who gave not his money upon usury,
And took no bribe against the innocent;
He that doeth these things shall never be overthrown.*

Such is the description which David gave to Israel of the qualities of which a man must be possessed in order to enjoy the favour of his God, and to make himself a worthy guest when coming to visit the tabernacle, or, as it was called among them, "to countenance the Lord his God in Zion," *i.e.* to see him in his holy ordinances. If we compare this Psalm with the xxiv., in this book the lii., we will see that both contain the same doctrines and the same warning, only what is in one part of the latter shortly expressed, is in this Psalm clearer and more extended. Both were intended to teach Israel the qualities of a true child and worshipper of the righteous God; and that though the mere outward form may procure for one the esteem of his fellow men, who look to the outward appearance only, yet he must know that he has to do with Him who knows the heart and tries the reins of man, and discerns his thoughts afar off.

The next Psalm, which numbers 1. in the common order, was composed for the same purpose, *viz.*, to show Israel the real character of God; and that it is by no means the mere sacrifice which will make man acceptable in His sight. It is intended to teach that it was only the sacrifice of the just, faithful, and pious man, which is a sweet savour to God, but that the sacrifice of the wicked is an abhorrence to him. Indeed this doctrine was most needful and most important to Israel, who were ordered to bring sin and trespass-offerings for sins committed, and who were promised that their sins would be expiated. But throughout Leviticus, we never find an expiatory sacrifice ordered, or expiation and pardon promised, for a sin wilfully committed. It was only for a sin committed through ignorance that a sacrifice was ordered and pardon promised. To make this doctrine distinctly understood was David's object in this Psalm, as we shall see. Though we cannot ascertain the exact time of its composition, still we are satisfied from its poetry and sentiments, that David was its author, and that he gave it to Asaph to be performed in the temple; hence we could find no place better appropriated for it than this after the foregoing Psalm.

or to his good," &c. This is the real signification there of לְהָרַח אֶי לְהָרַח (Leharah oi Lehetiv), "either to his own hurt" (for instance, as to make a vow of a Nazarite, which was to expose himself to great hardships in all the observances connected with it, &c.), "or to his good" (which is to be taken in a very wide sense, as a resolution made by an oath regarding any thing that is for his good or welfare); so in our verse it is given as one quality of a good man that he changes not his oath when once pronounced, cost what it may. Such a man will naturally think much over a matter before he resolves upon it by an oath, and even before he makes any promise, though without an oath, he will deliberately think over; it but when it is made he will fulfil it faithfully.

* "Who gave not his money upon usury." As the Israelites were an agricultural people, they were forbidden in the law to give their money on interest to one another. (See Exod. xxii. 25; Lev. xxv. 37; Deut. xxiii. 19, 20, &c.) "And took no bribe against the innocent," means to take bribe from the guilty party in order to condemn the innocent. (See Exod. xxiii. 6-8; Deut. xvi. 19.)

PS. L. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXVI.

A SONG OR PSALM FOR ASAPH.

1. Jehovah, the Almighty God, hath spoken,
And called forth the earth,
From the rising of the sun even to its going down.*
2. From Zion the perfection of beauty,
O God, shine forth in glory.
3. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence ;
A fire shall devour before him,
And round about him shall be a mighty tempest.
4. He shall summon the heavens from above,
And likewise the earth, to the judgment of his people.
5. "Assemble unto me, O ye my saints,
Those that have covenanted with me by sacrifice."
6. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness :
For God himself is the judge, Selah, for ever.

These six verses form the sublime introduction to the Psalm, in which Jehovah is there represented as the speaker throughout. We remarked in the preface, that the primary import and object of this glorious song was to shake Israel out of their false notion, that whatever their moral character might be—however abominable and numerous their sins—a sin-offering would expiate them, and reconcile them to God. To cure Israel of such a dangerous delusion, the Psalmist represents in vivid figures the appearance of that holy God on Mount Sinai, in the midst of lightnings, thunders, and flames of fire ; and tells them that he is the same almighty Jehovah who created the universe out of chaos—who appeared in such terrible splendour on Sinai—and who said, "Be ye holy, for I your God am holy ;" "Be thou perfect with Jehovah thy God." After having introduced Jehovah in the first verse as the Creator of the universe, the Psalmist in the second exclaims, "From Zion, the perfection of beauty (for Jehovah in the Ark, and Cherubim, and Shechinah, accomplished her splendour), אֱלֹהִים הוֹפִיָּא (Elohim Hophiah) O God, shine forth in glory" (the "Hophiah" here stands in the imperative as in Ps. lxxx. 1.).

* Whatever commentators have been pleased to make of this verse, we can understand nothing else in it than a reference to the creation of the world. Jehovah, who is to be the speaker throughout the Psalm from verse 7th, is introduced by the Psalmist as that Almighty God who "hath spoken," i.e. his creative word in the beginning וַיִּקְרָא אֶרֶץ (Vayikra Aretz) "And called forth the earth," i.e. into existence. That the word Vayikra signifies and was used in Scripture to denote a creative call of anything into existence which was not before, or to change the natural situation of any thing which cannot be done but by the Creator of the universe, the following passages will prove, *Isai. xli. 4*, "Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning?" &c., which clearly refers to the creation of man ; *xlviii. 13*, "Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens : when I call unto them," or, "I called them forth as they stand together;" *Amos v. 8*, "Who called the waters of the sea, and poured them forth upon the earth," i.e. at the deluge. So in our verse it refers to the creation when Jehovah called forth the earth, viz., the world into existence ; and the same Jehovah summons his people to judgment as in verse 4, &c.

The meaning is, that Jehovah; whose Ark and Cherubim were now standing on Mount Zion, should manifest his glory there, as he did once on Sinai, in order to make the hypocrites in Zion tremble, and that they might see that He was the same holy and avenging God, that he was a flaming fire. This is farther evident from what follows: "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence," or, Let our God come, and let him not tarry; "a fire shall devour before him, and round about him shall be a mighty tempest: He shall summon the heavens from above, and likewise the earth, to the judgment of his people." Here we see that Jehovah is represented as coming in his omnipotent glory, appearing as a devouring fire; and all this was to judge his people. That the heavens and the earth are here represented as summoned to attend when the judgment was to take place, is owing to the fact that the magnificent song of Moses which he was commanded to leave to Israel as a witness, begins in these words, "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth," &c. Deut. xxxii. 1. These eternal witnesses are summoned to attend Jehovah's judgment of his people on Zion; and indeed the whole of this introduction seems to aim directly at several passages of the Song of Moses, which was most appropriate to the subject. But while the Most High is represented as coming in awful majesty to judgment, comfort and consolation are held forth to His faithful ones, who entered his covenant anew on that solemn day when the Ark was conveyed to Zion (see Psalm xxiv., in this book Psalm lii. and exposition), and when sacrifices were offered there on that solemn occasion.

"Assemble unto me, O ye my saints, those that have covenanted with me by sacrifice." This verse is introduced intentionally in the midst of the introduction, to show that, whilst terror should overtake the hypocrites in Zion, Jehovah would stretch forth his protecting hand, and call his faithful children to come to him, and not to fear the awful sight of his appearance, nor tremble at the judgment that is to overtake the sinners. In the 6th verse, which is combined with the 4th, the Psalmist continues to speak of the character of the judgment: "And the heavens," i.e. which were summoned to attend, "shall declare his righteousness (by signs of terror): for God himself is the judge, Selah, for ever."

We must now suppose that Jehovah appears in the midst of his people—and in the presence of heaven and earth, He, as the great and holy Judge, begins to speak as follows:

7. Hear, O ye my people, and I will speak;
O Israel, and I will bring witness against thee: *
God, even thy God, am I.

* וְאֶעֱדָה בָּךְ (Veaidah Boch) means, "and I will bring witness against thee, or, "address thee in the presence of these witnesses," i.e. the heavens and earth summoned in verse 4 (not, as it is erroneously rendered by almost all commentators, "and I will testify against thee," which has neither place nor meaning.) This stands in close connection with Deut. xxxi. 28, "Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their ears, וְאֶעֱדָה בָּם (Veaidah Bom), and I will call," or, "and I will constitute as witness against them the heavens and the earth." This Moses did at the beginning of chap. xxxii.; and so here, these witnesses were summoned to the place of judgment in verse 4, and the great Judge says, "Hear, O ye my people, and I will speak; O Israel (i.e. hear), and I will address thee in the presence of these witnesses;" or, "I will bring these witnesses against

8. Not for thy sacrifices will I reprove thee,
Nor for thy burnt-offerings, to be continually before me.
9. I will not take a bullock out of *thine house*,
Nor he-goats out of thy flocks :
10. For mine is every beast of the forest—
The cattle upon the thousands of hills.
11. I have appointed all the fowls of the mountains ;
And the wild beasts of the field are at my disposal.*
12. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee :
For mine is the world, and the fulness thereof.
13. Will I eat the flesh of bulls ?
Or will I drink the blood of goats ?
14. Sacrifice unto God thank-offerings,
Pay thy vows unto the Most High :
15. And call upon me in the day of distress :
I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

According to the introduction to this truly sublime Psalm, Jehovah appeared in his glory in Zion, and having summoned heaven and earth to witness in the controversy he was to open with his people, He first asserts that He is their God and their Judge, "Hear, O ye my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will bring witness against thee: God, even thy God am I." Like as on Mount Sinai He first asserted his supremacy before giving them the commandments, saying, "I am Jehovah thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt," &c., so here he opens it by saying, "God, even thy God am I." I have every right and power over thee; thou art my property, as the creatures of my hand, whom I delivered, fed, and nourished, and established in this land, and hence I can claim every thing of thee. Jehovah then proceeds to address, first, his saints—his faithful children who had recently renewed the covenant with him by sacrifice, verse 5. He reproveth them with cutting argument for the discontinuance of his burnt-offerings on the altar for many years in the reign of Saul, and the first seven years of David's reign. The continual burnt-offering was strictly commanded to Israel, especially in the following passage, "Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, my offering, and my bread for my sacrifices made by fire for a sweet savour unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season. . . . Two lambs of the first year without spot, day by day, for a continual burnt-offering. The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other

thee," i.e. heaven and earth. In the presence of these witnesses, Jehovah asserts first, his authority as Israel's God, and then proceeds with his controversy.

* "I have appointed," or "ordered," i.e. called into existence by my power and will; so יָדַעְתִּי (Yadety) must here signify, only, those who put the points did not understand the meaning of it, or they should have pointed it יָדַעְתִּי (Yodety), as in 1 Sam. xxi. 2. The want of the ו here makes no difference in the meaning. זִיז (Ziz), of the second clause, means, wild beasts, so called because of their swiftness and quick motion (compare Ps. lxxx. 13.) The word זִמְדִּי (Imadi), "with me," means, "at my disposal," "in my hand," "in my power." (See Gen. xxiv. 25, "straw and provender enough is with us," i.e. in our possession, at our disposal; so the same in many other places.)

lamb shalt thou offer at even. . . . It is a continual burnt-offering, which was ordained in Mount Sinai for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto Jehovah." (See this passage complete in Numb. xxviii. 1—8; compare also the original passage, Exod. xxix. 38—43.) The neglect and violation of that strict commandment forms the principal subject in this part of the Psalm, and the first branch of the controversy.* At the

* We are astonished to see that commentators in general understand in this Psalm an abolition of sacrifices, and of the whole Levitical laws; but this we deny to have any place throughout the Old Testament Scriptures, unless when it appears in connection with the Great Sacrifice, the suffering Messiah, who was to be the Antitype of sacrifice and altar, and in whom the shadows were to become a reality. This not being the case in our Psalm—the Messiah not being mentioned nor alluded to in a single word of it, as the substitute of sacrifices, to understand therefore that an abolition is here meant, would be in direct opposition to the whole Levitical law and institution, and we would make God abolish what He had so strictly commanded therein. To illustrate our argument, we must first take our Psalm, and the common opinion of commentators, under close examination. This opinion is, that verse 8, "Not for thy sacrifices will I reprove thee, nor for thy burnt offerings to be continually before me," means as much as if God had said, "I have no pleasure in them—I do not require them—I do not call on you to offer them." The same do they render verse 14, "Offer unto God thanksgiving," &c., i.e. not thank offerings, in which I have no delight, and call not for; but give your thanks instead of offerings. Now this opinion we reject, as being in opposition to the law and testimony of God, for the following reasons: 1st. How could the true, holy, faithful, and unchangeable God, speak thus in the face of the whole Levitical law, in which He so scrupulously ordered all the sacrifices, many of which were holy types of a dying Saviour, and which He himself calls "most holy?" (See Exod. xxix. 34, 37—46; Lev. ii. 10, vi. 17, 25, 29, vii. 6; and in many other places we find that Jehovah called these sacred types most holy.) 2d. How could God indicate here that He was indifferent to sacrifices, even before the Antitype appeared (of whom no mention is made in this Psalm) seeing that such were commanded again and again, and that He had many times expressed that they would be "a sweet smelling savour" unto him (see Exod. xxix. 41; Lev. i. 13, 17, ii. 2, 9, iii. 5, &c. &c.)? But more especially, how could God say that He had no pleasure in the continuance of the burnt-offering on his altar, regarding which He had said, "Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, My offering and my bread for my sacrifices made by fire, for a sweet savour unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season. . . . Two lambs of the first year, without spot, day by day, for a continual burnt-offering, . . . which was ordained in Mount Sinai for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto Jehovah" (Numb. xxviii. 1—8; compare also Exod. xxix. 38—46)? Now, how can it be imagined, that without an express indication of a better sacrifice—of a glorious Antitype, God would simply tell Israel that he had no pleasure in those sacrifices which He had ordered with such strictness to be offered? Would such a thing be done in a Psalm which was intended for the purpose of being sung at the very altar on which these holy types were offered for a sweet smelling savour unto Jehovah, who had so ordered them? Had Israel understood this Psalm in this light, would they have entered the tabernacle any more? Would they have ventured to bring sacrifices again to the altar, for which Jehovah neither called nor had delight in? Would they have built a temple after such a rebuke from God, and that He by no means called for their sacrifices? Had the saints understood the Psalm thus, would they not have regarded it their bounden duty to remove the tabernacle and altar out of the way altogether, in order that they might not be a stumbling block in the way of the ignorant?

3d. Had Israel understood verse 14 as commentators render it and wish to understand it, viz., that God said, that instead of sacrifices, they should bring Him thanksgiving, with which He would be more pleased, would not this have been a terrible doctrine for them? Would they not thereby have understood that remission of sins could be obtained, not by blood-shedding, nor by type or antitype of a Saviour, but by their prayers and praises alone? 4th. If the abolition of sacrifices had been intended in this Psalm, why does God give the call in verse 5, "Assemble unto me, O ye my saints; those who have covenanted with me by sacrifice?" How could he recommend a thing that he designed to abolish in the same Psalm? But besides this, the 14th verse is falsely translated; for זבח לעלויים (Zevach Le-Elohim Todah) means, "Sacrifice unto God thank-offerings," and not "offer thanksgiving;" for the Psalm does not speak in mysteries and metaphors, but means literally to sacrifice the beasts for thank-offerings (as Zevach Todah means in Lev. vii. 12, 15, &c.; Ps. cvii., chronologically Ps. xxxix. 22; Ps. cxvi., chronologically Ps. lxx. 17.) Especially where it is expressly said that the paying of a vow was connected with offerings, then it must refer to sacrifices, and not to metaphors; and in verse 14th the paying of the vow comes after it. Now, if it was a metaphor, what have vows to do with it, seeing that under the New Testu-

same time He tells them, that it was not theirs, but his own, that He claimed: "Not for *thy* sacrifices will I reprove thee, nor for *thy* burnt-offerings to be continually before me," *i.e.* it is not *thy* property that I claim—though hast not brought all *thy* possessions with thee from Egypt whence I brought thee into this land, and enriched thee with the wealth of the nations. Hence it is not *thy* sacrifices nor *thy* burnt-offerings that I claimed for a continual sweet-smelling savour unto me upon mine altar. The expressions in verse 9 have the same meaning, *viz.*, not of *thine* house, not of *thy* flock do I take these sacrifices, for the world and its fulness belong unto me. But the argument takes another turn, and the Lord begins to show them that, in offering sacrifices to him, they are the party benefited by it,—that he does neither eat the flesh of bulls nor drink the blood of goats—

ment dispensation there are neither vows nor the performance of them, either real or metaphorical?

But the fact of the matter is, that in this Psalm (from verse 7 to 15) the Lord comes to rebuke His children who had "renewed His covenant by sacrifice," for their neglect of His burnt-offerings for several years, as well as to terrify the hypocrite in Zion, (verse 16 to 22) and to tell *him* that *he* has no right to meddle with the ordinances of God, for that *his* sacrifice is an abomination in His sight. (Compare the 1st chapter of Isaiah.) But while the Lord reproves the just for the discontinuance of the burnt offerings, He tells them that it is not *their* property which he takes, but his own, for His is the universe, and all they possessed pertained to Him. He gave it unto them. "Not for *thy* sacrifices will I reprove thee," *i.e.*, not for *thy* property (for the whole force lies upon the pronoun "*thy*"); nor is it *thy* burnt-offerings that I wish to be continually before me, for all that the world contains is mine, and it is my own property that I claim. In this light alone we can understand a passage in Isa. xliii. 23, 24. "Thou (Israel) hast not brought me the lambs of thy burnt-offerings, neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices; . . . Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices; but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins; thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities." Now, surely, Israel brought unto the Lord many hundred thousand lambs for burnt-offerings, and bought the best spices from remote countries. (See Jer. vi. 20.) But the meaning of that passage is the same as in our Psalm. God pleads with a nation whom he had delivered from slavery, and to whom He had given Canaan and the riches of the heathen. He therefore means here to say, "O Israel, not *thy* lambs hast thou brought me for burnt-offerings—not for *thy* money hast thou bought me cane and spices, for all thou hast I gave thee; all that thou spendest in my sanctuary was mine, except the sin, and iniquity, and transgression which thou hast brought into it; these were, and are, *thine*, and I was wearied with their multitude. In considering the different passages of Scripture of the same import as this just mentioned, we must keep one thing in view, *viz.* that Jehovah never said to Israel, "Sin, but bring sacrifices for it;" no, the sacrifice most acceptable to God is the thank and burnt offerings of the saint in the performance of a vow; and though He has ordered sin-offerings for sin committed in ignorance, there is none ordered for a sin wilfully committed. (See our exposition of Leviticus in our publication on the Old Testament Scriptures, where these subjects are largely treated.) It is also an important fact, that wherever the sin-offering is mentioned in Scripture, we do not find, as of all other sacrifices, that the Lord says that it would be a "sweet smelling savour unto him." The reason is plainly this, that the sin-offering, the body of which was burnt without the camp, was the type of the suffering Saviour on the cross, when bleeding and dying in agonies there. In this Jehovah was reminded, as it were, not only of man's sin, which is abominable in His sight, but also of the dear ransom He was to pay for it, *viz.* His Son. But the burnt-offering, on the other hand, ascending on high in the midst of the sacred flame, was a most expressive type of the triumphantly risen Saviour; and hence it was "a sweet-smelling savour" unto God. (See our exposition on Leviticus above-mentioned.) Hence also we can understand how abominable it was in the sight of God, when a presumptuous rebel brought either sin or burnt-offerings. Of such the prophet Isaiah speaks in his first and last chapters; and of such our Psalm speaks from verse 16 to 22. In this light also we must understand a passage in Jeremiah vii. 22, not that the Lord had not "commanded them concerning burnt-offerings and sacrifice," for surely he had commanded them, and often enough; but that the command was conditional,—that they must first be sincere and thus be worthy (by obedience and good acts) of the Divine acceptance of their sacrifices—that the Lord had made sacrifice a secondary command to obedience. (See Exod. xv. 26; 1 Sam. xv. 26; compare also Amos v. 25.) That this is the meaning of Jeremiah may be seen from the succeeding context, where he shows them that as they had not kept the first command, *viz.* obedience, the second, *viz.* sacrifices, was never commanded, *i.e.* never intended to stand when the basis had fallen

that the typical sacrifices were intended for their own welfare as was the great sacrifice the Antitype—that when the children of God acknowledge mercies received by bringing thank-offerings to the altar, He finds a sweet-smelling savour only in the gratitude which they thereby show to Him while they themselves are benefited and their welfare secured. Therefore the Lord says in verse 14, “Sacrifice unto God thank-offerings, and pay thy vows unto the Most High;” *i.e.* when Jehovah has dealt bountifully with thee, and caused thy store to overflow, then offer unto Him thank-offerings—honour him with thy superabundance, while the whole belongs to Him—acknowledge in this way his goodness and mercy. O, if thou hast been in distress, in trials, and troubles, and made a solemn vow unto the Lord, and He heard thee and delivered thee; then “pay thy vows unto the Most High,”—bring the vowed sacrifices to the altar—pay thy debt—acknowledge Jehovah’s goodness and mercy, and His works of wonder to the children of men (see our exposition of Psalm cvii., in this book Ps. xxxix; comp. Eccles. v. 4, 5); and what will be the consequences? “Call upon me in the day of distress; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me,” *i.e.* be thou faithful and pay what belongs to me, and thus prove me whether I be a faithful God, and a ready and present help in time of trouble.

While the faithful children of God have received such a sweet and encouraging fatherly lesson, Jehovah turns now against the hypocrites in Zion, and tells them that they, along with their sacrifices, and even all their outward observances of the ceremonial law, are an abomination to Him.

16. But to the wicked God saith,
What right hast thou to recite my ordinances,
And why takest thou my Covenant into thy mouth?
17. Since thou hatedst instruction, and castedst my orders behind thee;
18. When thou sawest a thief, thou didst consent to him,
And with adulterers thou didst take thy share.
19. With thy mouth thou didst send forth mischief,
And thy tongue did frame deceit.
20. Thou continuest to speak against thy brother;
Against the son of thy mother thou pourest forth calumny.
21. These things hast thou done, and I kept silence:
Didst thou think that I am a being like thyself?
I will rebuke thee, and set myself in array against thy face.
22. O consider this, ye that forget God,
Lest I tear in pieces, and there be no deliverer.

Such is the terrible judgment of the wicked hypocrite, and such an abomination is he in the sight of that holy God who searches and knows the heart of man, and tries his thoughts. The hypocrite may deceive men, by accompanying the multitude in outward religious services, but he will most grievously impose on himself if he thinks that he is able to deceive that all-surveying Eye that penetrates even the regions of deepest darkness. In the last verse, the encouragement of the children of God is confirmed by a glorious promise, not only for time, but for eternity.

23. He that sacrificeth thank-offerings glorifieth me :
And there will I show him the way of God's salvation.

The first clause of this verse is a repetition of the last clause of verse 15, "I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me," *i.e.* I will continue to send thee deliverance, and thou wilt continue to glorify me in acknowledging my mercy publicly, and in renewing my covenant by sacrifice. So here He says, "He that sacrificeth thank-offerings glorifieth me;" וְשֹׁם דָּרַךְ אֲרָנוּ (Veshom Dorech Arenu), "and there," *i.e.* in eternity, after he has glorified me in time, "I will show him the way of God's salvation," *i.e.* the way of life. Ps. xvi., or lxxxv. 11. He will glorify me in time with his obedience, praise, and bounty, and I will glorify him in eternity with my salvation.

PREFACE TO TWO SERIES OF PSALMS WHICH WERE COMPOSED BY DAVID FOR THE TEMPLE OR TABERNACLE SERVICE.

There are two series of Psalms which appear to have been composed by David for the temple services, though the exact time of composition cannot be ascertained. We thought it most advisable, therefore, to introduce them here before we come to those Psalms which are strictly Messianic, and which must have been written after the everlasting covenant was made with David through the prophet Nathan, and before the penitential and Absalom Psalms. The first of these series extends from cxiii. to cxviii. inclusive, and embraces also Psalms cxxxv. and cxxxvi., which evidently belong to the same subject. With the exception of some personal references to David in the cxvi.—cxviii., they all celebrate the wonders which the Lord showed to his people in their deliverance from Egypt, and the judgments which overtook their enemies. It is very likely that the whole chain of Psalms was composed for the Passover feast, though not exclusively. Even those of them which bear individual reference to David, his sufferings and persecutions, and his deliverance and happiness, were intended as songs of triumph for the Church, as we may learn from the Messianic prophecies, which they include. David as king rejoiced before the Lord on solemn feasts among the multitude, and recorded in the general songs of praise the mercies of Jehovah, which he experienced; and every right he had to consider his personal deliverances as national, because the nation was exalted in and with him, and especially because there are some references to future glorious things, which were to receive their fulfilment in his illustrious descendant the Messiah. But these things will be clearly seen as the Psalms come under our notice. The other series—cxlv. to cl.—forms one glorious universal song of adoration and praise. These two series of Psalms—those of them even that have no personal reference—bear every mark of David's pen; and we shall therefore take them up here in succession. It is a matter of little importance in what year they were composed: they are pure angelic praise, and must be assigned to an early period of David's reign, as has been stated above.

PS. CXIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXVII.

(Halleluyah)—Praise ye Jehovah.

1. O praise, ye servants of Jehovah,
Praise ye Jehovah's name.
2. Let Jehovah's name be blessed,
From henceforth and for evermore.
3. From the rising of the sun unto his setting down,
Adored be Jehovah's name.
4. Exalted above all nations is Jehovah,
His glory is above the heavens.
5. Who is like unto Jehovah our God,
Who thus exalteth his dwelling place on high ;
6. Who thus condescendeth to survey all
That is in heaven and on earth.
7. He raiseth the poor from the dust ;
From the dunghill he exalteth the needy—
8. To place him among princes,
Even among the princes of his people.
9. He setteth the barren woman in the midst of a family,
To be a rejoicing mother with her children :
O Praise ye Jehovah.*

PS. CXIV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXVIII.

1. When Israel came out of Egypt,
The house of Jacob from a barbarous nation ;
2. Then was Judah his sanctuary,
Israel his dominions.
3. The sea perceived it and fled ;
The Jordan was driven backward :
4. The mountains skipped like rams ;
The hills like the young lambs.

* This most excellent hymn is to be considered as the introduction to those which follow. With it the temple service opened on the feast of the Passover (as we observed in the preface.) The first four verses contain a general invitation to the children of God to come forth to His praise. As Jehovah is represented in verse 4 as exalted above the nations, and his glory above the heavens, so in verses 5 and 6 His condescending love is celebrated in that, notwithstanding he is so highly exalted, He disdains not to uphold and regulate the heavenly bodies, and to look down upon the earth and fill it with his all-surveying eye. In verses 7 and 8, David no doubt makes allusion to his own exaltation, though they are chiefly intended as applicable to the Church. "The barren woman," mentioned in the last verse, may have a primary reference to Sarah, Rachel, &c., but especially to Hannah, the mother of Samuel, with whose song in 1 Sam. ii. 1—10 the reader may compare the last three verses of our Psalm ; but as even these facts were considered among Israel as typical of the Church, so we must consider the expression in the last verse as a special reference to Jehovah's wondrous dealings with his persecuted and derided Church, which nevertheless triumphs at last (compare Isa. liv. 1 ; Gal. iv. 27.)

The fact that the following Psalms have no title or superscription shows what we have stated, that this Psalm is introductory to the rest. The next celebrates the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt.

5. What befel thee, O sea, that thou fleest ?
Thou Jordan, that thou art driven backward !
6. Ye mountains, that ye skip like rams ?
Ye hills, like the young lambs ?
7. Before the presence of the Monarch,
Tremble thou, O earth,
Even before the presence of the God of Jacob :
8. Who turneth the rock into a water pool—
The hard stone into a fountain of water.*

PS. CXV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXIX.

1. Not unto us, O Jehovah, not unto us,
But unto thy name be glory ascribed,
Because of thy mercy, and because of thy faithfulness.
2. Wherefore say the heathen, " But where, we pray, is their God ? "
3. Seeing it is our God who is in the heavens,
That hath made all things according to his pleasure.†
4. Their idols are silver and gold, the production of human hands.
5. They have mouths, but they speak not ;
Eyes have they, but they see not :
6. They have ears, but they hear not ;
They have noses, but they do not smell ;

* This noble Psalm is a short but glorious description of Jehovah's miracles wrought at the Red Sea, and at Sinai, and Jordan. When Israel came forth from Egypt, the house of Jacob מֵעַם לֵצִי (Meam Loetz), "from a barbarous nation," or tyrannical people (to make these

words signify a "strange language," is absurd ; for what did it matter to the bleeding Jew in Egypt what language his murderer spoke) ; "Then was Judah his sanctuary—Israel his dominions." This sublime figure refers to Jehovah in the pillar of cloud and of fire, having resided in the midst of the open camp, as he did afterwards in the temple in the sanctuary between the Cherubim. Hence also the expression, "his dominions," the dominions of the great King were Israel, in the midst of whom he resided. This was the reason why the sea fled, and Sinai and Horeb skipped in the midst of earthquake and lightning, &c., and why Jordan was driven backward ; and the following verse confirms it, "Before the presence of the Monarch, tremble thou, O earth," &c. But this Psalm contains only an outline of the whole glorious chain of praise. It indicates that difficulties and obstructions are nothing when God goes forth with his church.

† This Psalm is understood by some commentators to have been composed at a period when the nation was in a very low condition, and refer it to the time subsequent to the Babylonian captivity ; and why ? because the heathen are represented as asking, "Where is now their God ?" But even had there been a "now" in the text, it would not warrant the conclusion that it must have been written after that event ; for surely the heathen might, nay must, have put the same question even in the days of Israel's greatest prosperity. Seeing that they boasted always in their wonder-working God, what was more likely than for the heathen to say, "Why does not their God show his wonders now, as Israel say that he did before ?" But the word נָא (Nah) in our verse does not signify "now," and throughout the

Bible it is oftener rendered "I pray." In this passage the heathen with their visible material deities are represented as asking Israel, or each other, "Where, we pray, is their God ?" i.e., while our gods, Moloch, or Dagon, &c., are seen by every one of us, Israel is boasting in a God whom they never saw ; "Where, we pray, is their God ?" But David answers them, "Our God is in heaven ;" true, he is invisible, but he is the Creator of the universe. He next describes to the heathen the character of their dumb idols, and then turns again to praise Jehovah, and encourage Israel in their faith in the almighty though invisible God. The connection of this Psalm with the former is so obvious as to need no remark.

7. Hands have they, but they do not feel ;
Neither do they walk on their feet ;
Nor do they talk through their throat.
8. Like unto them shall be those that made them—
Even all who put their trust in them.

The Psalmist having thus exposed the folly of the heathen, who asked where Israel's God was (verse 2), and having mocked and derided their visible metallic idols of human workmanship, now turns to give an account and reason of Israel's trust in their invisible Jehovah, the Creator of the universe, as he represented him in verse 3.

9. Israel trusteth in Jehovah,
For He is their Help and their Shield.
10. The house of Aaron have put their trust in Jehovah,
For He is their Help and their Shield,
11. They who fear Jehovah, have put their trust in Jehovah,
For He is their Help and their Shield.

Such is the grand contrast between the heathen and their dumb idols, of which the Psalmist says in verse 8, "Like unto them shall become those that made them, and so all who put their trust in them" (*i.e.* helpless, useless), and Israel who know the reason why they serve their great and invisible God. "Israel trusteth in God," not because they have made Him, as the heathen do their idols, but because He made them—because He established them as a nation—because they have tasted and seen that He is good—because "He is their help and their Shield." The Psalmist now closes with a prayer for God's blessing on the nation, as was usually done on solemn feasts, and on such occasions when this series of Psalms was sung in the temple. Remembering the late deliverance and victory which Jehovah granted Israel over the Philistines, he concludes that he would still continue to confer blessings upon them.

12. Jehovah hath been mindful of us, He will bless—
He will bless the house of Israel ;
He will bless the house of Aaron.
13. He will bless those who fear Jehovah,
Both the small and the great.
14. May Jehovah increase you—you, and your children.
15. Be ye blessed of Jehovah, Creator of heaven and earth.
16. The heavens of heavens are for Jehovah,
But the earth he hath given to the sons of men.
17. The dead praise not Jehovah.
Nor all those who descend to the place of silence.
18. But we will bless Jehovah,
From this time forth and for evermore ;
[Halleluyah] Praise ye Jehovah.

With these three Psalms, which begin and end with the Doxology, the first part of the public worship in the sanctuary ended. Now cometh the

king to offer his sacrifices of thanksgiving upon the altar, and also the burnt-offerings for vows which he might have made since the last solemn occasion. He then makes his confession to God, and praises and adores his name in public, acknowledging all his mercies and loving kindnesses towards him, and for which the sacrifices were brought by him. Probably the whole series of Psalms before us was composed by David for the first feast of the Passover, after the erection of the tabernacle on Zion. As to the order and use of these Psalms afterwards in the temple, we are quite satisfied respecting them from different sources of information, the truth of which we have no reason to doubt. The following Psalm is most touching and excellent, and contains David's confession (as above stated), made at the altar before the sacrifices were prepared by the priests and laid thereon ;—and the succeeding two (which may be considered as one), the king sung after the sacrifices were ready made and burnt on the altar. Then the concluding Psalms follow, as we shall see.

PS. CXVI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXX.

1. I love Jehovah, for he always heard
My voice in my supplications.
2. Because he inclined his ear to me,
Therefore, all my days will I call upon him.

The first statement of the devoted saint at the altar of God is, that he loves Jehovah. That the name Jehovah appears in the Hebrew text after the words signifying "for he always heard," or "for he is wont to hear," is owing to the sublime style of the verse. The fact that the Psalmist loves Jehovah is interwoven with the reason, to make it more firm ; he loves Jehovah because he has reason to do so—because he had tasted his boundless mercy in time of extreme distress—because he had called and supplicated many a time, and Jehovah had inclined his ear and heard him, and delivered him. Therefore he loves him—therefore he is resolved to praise and adore all his days. On this foundation the Psalm is built, and now the Psalmist enters into particulars.

3. When the bands of death encompassed me,
And the pains of hell laid hold on me :
When I experienced distress and anguish ;—
4. Then on the name of Jehovah I called :
"I beseech thee, O Jehovah, deliver my soul."
5. O how gracious is Jehovah, and how benevolent !
Yea, our God is full of compassion.
6. Jehovah guardeth the simple :
When I was brought low, then he wrought salvation for me.

This confession of David is full of references to his history, and the reader will find the best exposition of the Psalm in comparing as follows, viz., verse 3 (which refers in particular to his imprisonment in Philistia) with Ps. lvi., in this book Ps. xii., and exposition ; but as the third clause may also refer to his lamentable condition on several other occasions under

the bitter persecution of Saul, compare Psalms cxlii. and cxliii., in this book xv. and xvi., also lvii. and lix., in this book xxxi. and xi. In these Psalms, the prayer of David, contained here in verse 4, will be found often repeated. Of the statement in verse 6, that "Jehovah guardeth the simple," a full explanation will be found in our exposition of Ps. lxxiii., in this book Ps. xli., especially verses 22, 23. On the second clause of this verse, "When I was brought low, then he wrought salvation for me," compare Psalm xxx., in this book xlviii. Having made such a glowing and happy confession regarding the deliverance and salvation that Jehovah had wrought for him, he gives utterance to his feeling of joy, and hope, and faith, in the three succeeding verses; and then in verses 10, 11, he acknowledges an error into which he fell by reason of his great sufferings, and the oppression his soul was under.

7. Return to thy rest, O my soul,
For Jehovah hath rewarded thee,
8. Seeing thou hast delivered my soul from death—
Mine eyes from tears—my feet from falling ;
9. I shall therefore walk before Jehovah, in the regions of life.
10. I believed : therefore have I said,
"I am afflicted over much :"
11. I also said in my great agitation,
"All men are liars."

In the former part we have seen how the Psalmist expressed his deep gratitude to God who had heard his prayer and granted him deliverance, and had exercised mercy and compassion towards him, though he was not worthy of it; as he said in verse 6, God guardeth the simple, *i.e.* his erring children, who could not keep themselves pure from sin or from murmuring against Jehovah's dispensations in times of calamity (see the places referred to above on verse 6.) Seeing therefore that Jehovah's compassion was so great as to deliver him nevertheless, and to show him his salvation though he was not worthy of it, he exclaims in verse 7, "Return to thy rest, O my soul, for Jehovah hath rewarded thee," or recompensed thee, *i.e.* rest now, O my once sore-afflicted and oppressed soul—rest now from calamity—rest now from mourning and wailing—rest now from fear and trembling; and what is more, rest now from doubts and perplexities about the rectitude of Jehovah's government, and the equity of his dispensations, which thou hast so often taken into question. But why shall his soul be satisfied and get to rest? The answer is, "For Jehovah hath rewarded, or recompensed thee," *i.e.* for all thy toils—for all thy sufferings and calamities—for all thy tears and sighs, he has richly rewarded thee, and showed thee that all thy sufferings have worked together for thy good. As for the term גָּמַל (Ganal), which we render "rewarded," or "recompensed," the reader is requested to compare our exposition of Psalm cxlii., in this book xv. 7, and Psalm xliii. or xxiv. 6, where he will see that as David's sufferings weretypical of those of the Messiah, he was actually rewarded for them. The common version has repeatedly rendered it erroneously, "dealt bountifully," where it means rewarded; but in Ps. xviii. 20 it is properly rendered, rewarded, "The Lord rewarded me according" &c.

Having thus comforted and cheered his soul, David addresses himself to Jehovah his Saviour, and expresses his firm belief that He had redeemed it for eternal salvation and happiness; "Seeing thou hast delivered my soul from death—mine eyes from tears—my feet from falling; I shall therefore," or, surely I shall "walk before Jehovah בְּאֶרְצוֹת הַחַיִּים (Beartzoth Hachayim) in the regions" or lands "of life." Both nouns are in the plural; but whilst the second is often used to express "life" in the singular, we are astonished how commentators venture to render Beartzoth land, for it denotes either "lands" or "regions;" and as the former cannot be the meaning here, then surely it must refer to those blissful regions of eternity where death hath no dominion,—hence "the regions of life," of eternal, uninterrupted, unmolested life. The Psalmist then proceeds to explain his expression in verse 6, that "Jehovah guardeth the simple." This he declares, in verses 10 and 11, to have been a twofold error into which he had fallen by reason of the extreme sufferings and afflictions to which he had been exposed during his persecution under Saul;—the first was, that he had believed that his sufferings were too severe to be regarded as the chastisement of a loving Father; "I believed," *i.e.* I firmly and unhesitatingly concluded it to be so; "therefore," or "when I have said," and what was it he said? "I am afflicted over much," or "exceedingly much", *i.e.* he said and thought that he was over much afflicted—that he had not deserved such suffering and calamities to be poured on him (compare exposition of Ps. lxxiii. chronologically xli., especially from verses 10—14.) The second error into which he fell was that he had often concluded under great agitation (like the prophet Elijah after him), "that all men are liars," that there was not one among the whole nation of Israel worthy to be called a servant of God but himself (compare Ps. xii. chronologically xxiii. 1, and Ps. xiv., or xxv. and expositions.) How strongly were both those errors exposed and rebuked when he looked around him now, and beheld that as a mighty monarch over Jehovah's people he was standing at the altar of God, offering sacrifices of triumph and joy, and surrounded by a multitude of God-fearing and God-praising Israelites! How could he but solemnly confess his errors before the Lord, and the multitude of worshippers, that the latter might thereby take heed and learn patience in time of trouble! Seeing, therefore, that amidst all his weakness and errors God had proved so gracious and merciful, David proceeds to express his gratitude in the following verses:

12. O what shall I return unto Jehovah,
For all his rewards which he made to me ?
13. I will lift up the cup of salvation,
And call upon the name of Jehovah.
14. My vows unto Jehovah will I perform now
In the presence of all his people.
15. Precious in Jehovah's eyes is the death of his saints.
16. Now, O Jehovah, here am I as thy servant :
I am thy servant, the son of thine handmaid :
Thou hast loosed my bonds.
17. To thee will I sacrifice sacrifices of thank-offerings,
And I will call upon the name of Jehovah.

18. My vows unto Jehovah will I perform now
 In presence of all his people,
 19. In the courts of the house of the Lord,
 In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.
 Halleluyah. Praise ye Jehovah.

The merciful Jehovah made rich and manifold redress to David for his afflictions and sufferings, as he made to Job. He now saw that all his calamities had proved to be the very channel through which salvation and deliverance and exaltation were conveyed to him, notwithstanding the impatience and doubts which he cherished under his trials, and therefore he puts the question in verse 12, "O what shall I return, or what return can I make, unto Jehovah for his reward, or redress, which he made to me?" *i.e.* what have I to bring to him wherewith he would be pleased? The answer follows, "I will lift up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of Jehovah." This was a figure borrowed from the manner in which the drink-offering that always accompanied the thank-offerings at the performing of a vow (Num. xv. 1—13, xxix. 39) was lifted up by the priest before the Lord, before it was poured upon the sacrifices upon the altar; and was done in acknowledgment of the gratitude which the individual who performed the vow felt to Jehovah for the benefits he had received, and that he offered these cheerfully to the Lord. This figure David uses when he says that he will "lift up the cup of salvation," *i.e.*, while the priest lifted up the cup with the drink-offering which accompanied David's thank-offerings, he would hold forth his numerous deliverances before him. **ישועות** (Yesuoth) is, in the plural, "salvations," or "deliverances," and means that he would openly confess before Jehovah and in the presence of all Israel, the unmerited deliverances which his God had granted him. The fact that the "lifting up of the cup" is followed, in the next verse, by the paying of his vows in the presence of the people, proves clearly his meaning as we have explained it. Verse 14. "Precious in Jehovah's eyes is the death of his saints," *i.e.*, Jehovah's saints shall live for his praise, and for the promotion of his glory; and though he chastises them for their good, still their lives are too dear to him to be given over to death in any way till His plans and purposes with them are accomplished, and till His time for that event arrives. This explanation David gives himself in Psalm cxviii. verses 17—18 (see exposition *in loco*.) Seeing, therefore, that Jehovah had delivered David from death, and had paid such ransoms for his life (*viz.*, the deliverances), he acknowledges himself, in verse 16, to be Jehovah's property, his servant, or his slave, bought with a price; "I am thy servant, the son of thine handmaid," a strong figure for an inborn slave; but what follows? "Thou hast loosed my bonds," *i.e.*, though thou hast bought me and I am thy slave, thou dost not keep me as such—thou hast bestowed on me the freedom of a child—thou art a merciful Father (compare Psalm lxxxvi. 16—17.)

The king closes the Psalm by repeating the words of verses 13—14, with the exception of mentioning the nature of the sacrifices he was to offer: there he mentioned the "cup of salvation." **תודה וזבח** (Zevach Todah) "sacrifices of thanksgiving;" but it here refers to the sacrifices that he was now to offer on the altar as the performance of his vow,

and which sacrifices consisted of thank-offerings. David never offered sacrifices without praise and adoration accompanying them, but let sacrifice be understood "a beast for a sacrifice," and let no fancy carry it into a figure. Besides, wherever mention is made of paying a vow, the word "Todah" means nothing else than the beast which was brought as a thank-offering, and no figure for praise or thanksgiving.*

The next Psalm, which consists of two verses, must be considered as an introduction to the immediately succeeding one. It was performed by the Levites at the time when the king reposed after the confession made in the Psalm we have now considered, and while the priests made ready the sacrifices and put them on the altar.

PS. CXVII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXXI.

1. Praise Jehovah, all ye peoples :
Celebrate him all ye tribes.
2. For great toward us is his tender mercy :
And Jehovah's truth is everlasting.
Halleluyah. Praise ye Jehovah.

While this glorious invitation of praise was sung by the Levitical bands, David was reposing, and then he rose up with his harp, and gave utterance to the following hymn.

PS. CXVIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXXII.

1. O render thanks unto Jehovah ; for He is good :
For His mercy lasteth for ever.
2. O let Israel say, that His mercy lasteth for ever.
3. O let the house of Aaron say,
That His mercy lasteth for ever.
4. O let them that fear Jehovah say,
That His mercy lasteth for ever.

Having thus invited the house of Israel, priests and Levites, and all God-fearing Israelites, to thank God for his goodness and mercy towards

* We may notice here that wherever Dr Hengstenberg is induced to connect two or more Psalms so as to form his "trilogies," of which he is so fond, he will draw the conclusion from a word or two, that because these words are the same in both Psalms, therefore the latter must be one and the same too. Now, in this Psalm, there is not a verse, not even a phrase, which has not either a close reference to David's history, or which is not used by him in some other Psalms. In spite of this Dr H. has assigned its date posterior to the captivity. The reasons he gives for it are too weak for a learned man like him, and too tedious to be mentioned. One or two of his conclusions will suffice to show how far fancy will carry a man. He says, "A special reference to the deliverance from captivity occurs in, 'Thou hast loosed my bonds.'" To expose this absurdity we need not spend words, but will only request the reader to compare verses 1—4 of this Psalm with verses 4—6 of Psalm xviii. and then judge. He says further, "the melancholy character of the joy also, which it is impossible not to notice, is suitable to the occasion." Now we are sure that it must be "impossible" for any man of enlightened understanding to notice "melancholy" in a Psalm of the chiefest joy, as the cxvi. is.

them, he returns to praise Him for the personal deliverances and mercies which he had so largely experienced.

5. In distress I called upon Jehovah :
Jehovah answered me at large.
6. Jehovah is for me : I shall not fear :
What can man do unto me ?
7. Jehovah is for me, as One who helpeth me :
I shall see the end of those that hate me.
8. O it is better to take shelter in Jehovah,
Than to put confidence in man.
9. O it is better to take shelter in Jehovah,
Than to put confidence in princes.
10. Should all the heathen compass me about ;
In the name of Jehovah I shall surely cut them down.
11. Should they again and again compass me about ;
In the name of Jehovah I shall surely cut them down.
12. Should they beset me round like bees ;
They shall be extinguished like fire of thorns :
In the name of Jehovah I shall cut them down.

Such were the blessed results of David's experience. He had been in distress, in sufferings, and in affliction, but was not left to despair. He had called upon the Lord, and He had answered him at large. He had mourned and complained under the anguish of his soul, but the Comforter had consoled him, and wiped away the tears from his eyes. He had been brought low, but Jehovah had exalted him, and established him on a high rock of salvation and deliverance, of triumph and joy. Now stands the once despised and persecuted son of Jesse at Jehovah's altar, after which he had once longed and panted in the wilderness of Judah, in the dark caves of Adullam and Engedi, and in Philistia ; and as a mighty and triumphant monarch he utters the same words which he once uttered in Philistia's dark dungeon : " Jehovah is for me," or Jehovah is mine ; " I shall not fear ; what can man do unto me ? (Compare Psalm lvi., in this book xii. 3, 4, 9—13.) But while there he said, " I put my trust in God," now he can say, " Jehovah is mine ;" I have experienced it ; He is on my side, He is for me. Hence he says here in a bold and confident tone that even should the whole world of heathen unite against him, in the name of Jehovah he would cut them down. Proud Philistia had received a deadly blow in two battles, and the name of David was dreaded in Gath. In the Psalm above referred to, he had vowed a solemn vow in the prison unto Jehovah, the God of his promises ; and now was that vow paid in the presence of all Israel. Then he was a lonely prisoner in a dark dungeon, and all he could do was to pour forth in silence his plaintive supplications to the merciful God ; now had that God loosed his bonds (see Ps. cxvi. 16), and as king, he was accompanied by hundreds of the sons of Levi, who sang and played to the sweet melodies of his harp, " O render thanks unto Jehovah, for He is good ; for His mercy lasteth for ever."

13. Thou hast pushed and thrust at me, that I might fall ;
But Jehovah sustained me.

14. Jehovah is my glory, and the theme of my song,
For He became my salvation.
15. The voice of joyful singing and salvation
Is in the tabernacles of the righteous,
When Jehovah's right hand doeth valiantly.
16. The right hand of Jehovah is exalted :
The right hand of Jehovah doeth valiantly.

In verse 13, David addresses an individual in the second person, "Thou hast pushed and thrust at me, that I might fall." It was modesty, yea charity on his part not to mention the name in public, but we know who was intended. Saul had pushed and thrust at him with all his power, that he might overthrow and ruin him ; "but Jehovah sustained me," *i.e.* had sustained him in the open desert, or in dark caves among the mountains of Judah, or in Philistia, whither he had been driven by Saul. Therefore he says in verse 14, "Jehovah is my glory, and the theme," or substance "of my song ;" so זִמְרוֹת (Zimroth) means, "the theme or the object of my song," *i.e.* for Him, and in Him, and to Him, and with Him, do I sing, and praise, and adore ; and why ? "For He became my salvation." Zimroth has the same meaning in the parallel passages, Exod. xv. 2 ; Isa. xii. 2 ; but in Gen. xliii. 11, it means "substance," *viz.*, from the best and most celebrated fruits of the land. The import of verse 15 is, that the voice of joyful singing—of that praise which accompanies the joy of the children of God which is produced by salvation—is heard in the tabernacles of the righteous, when Jehovah's hand doeth valiantly, or worketh out victories for them. The following verse affirms that Jehovah's hand, or power, is exalted—that He always shows wonders of deliverance to his children ; and hence, the voice of joyful praise and triumph is always heard in the dwellings of the saints.

17. I shall not die, but I shall surely live,
That I should declare the works of Jehovah.
18. Though Jehovah hath chastened me sore ;
Yet hath He not delivered me up to death.
19. Open unto me the gates of deliverance :
By them I will enter in, and give thanks unto Jehovah.
20. This is the gate unto Jehovah :
By it the righteous shall enter in.

In verses 17 and 18 the Psalmist concludes, from the mysterious ways through which Jehovah had led him to exaltation on the throne—from the sufferings and trials which he had endured from Saul (verse 13)—and from the wonderful deliverances which had been granted him in every time of trouble and danger,—that the Lord's intention was that he might not die, but live, in order "that (so tried and purified in the furnace of affliction) he might declare the works, or dealings, of Jehovah." (Compare Ps. cxvi. chronologically lxx. 15, and exposition.) The import of verses 19 and 20 is most sublime. Jehovah's children enter their Father's sanctuary by the gates of deliverance ; hence they are often chastened sore, and purified, and delivered, that they may be the better fitted to praise

Him in His holy place (as verse 17 declares): David therefore says, "Open unto me the gates of deliverance," *i.e.* as if deliverance was the gate of Jehovah's avenue which leads directly to His palace. "By them will I enter in," *i.e.* into the palace, "and give thanks unto Jehovah" for his deliverance. The following verse is an illustration of it, "This is the gate unto Jehovah," *i.e.* the gate by which you must enter into His sanctuary, and which gate is deliverance again. But not every one is allowed to enter by that gate; it is only the children of the great King of the Palace,—“By it the righteous shall enter in.” Thus we see the beautiful connection of these four verses. (About the meaning of the word צֶדֶק [Tzedek], and that it often means “deliverance,” see critical note on verse 5 of Psalm lxxv., in this book lx.)

21. I give Thee thanks because Thou hast chastised me ;
And because this became my salvation.
22. The Stone which builders despised,
Is become the chief corner-stone.
23. By Jehovah hath this been done :
It is marvellous in our eyes.
24. This is the day which Jehovah hath made :
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

We have seen in verses 19 and 20 how David was taught by experience that the gate through which the children of God enter into His sanctuary, is “deliverance,” which presupposes chastisement and suffering. Through such a strait gate David entered that day into the sanctuary to praise his God for his goodness and mercy towards him. He therefore says in verse 21, “I give Thee thanks because Thou hast chastised me (so עֲנִיתָנִי, Anithani here signifies. Compare it with עֲנִיתִי Anithy of Ps. cxvi. 10); and because this became my salvation;” *i.e.* I give thee thanks that thou hast opened me the right gate into thy sanctuary, by which “the righteous must enter” (see verse 19)—that thou hast brought me to exaltation and joy by sufferings, and which very sufferings I see now to have been so greatly conducive to my spiritual welfare, yea, to my salvation. (Compare Psalm xxx., in this book xlviii. 11, 12, and Ps. cxix., in this book xxxvi. 71, in which latter passage the same word occurs in the same sense.) Verses 22, 23 have been explained both by our Saviour and by his apostles. (Matt. xxi. 42; Acts iv. 11.) They have been fulfilled in both father and Son, type and Antitype. Saul and his wicked associates despised, rejected, and persecuted David; but “by Jehovah it was done,” that he might become the chief corner-stone of the Church in Messiah his Son, and a mighty and glorious monarch: so Jesus, his Son and Antitype, was despised, rejected, and persecuted by Herod and the Pharisees; but Jehovah appointed him to be the Chief Corner-stone—the precious Corner-stone, laid in Zion; “neither is there salvation in any other,” &c. The first clause of verse 24, “This is the day which Jehovah hath made,” or hath appointed, has, we think, a double reference; 1st, to David’s government, and in him to that of the Messiah, and in this sense the day means the day of salvation and deliverance (the prophetic day very often means epoch, period,

(Isa. xi. 10—11, xii. 1—4, lxiii. 4, &c., &c.); 2d, to the feast of the passover celebrated on that day in commemoration of a former deliverance, viz. that from Egypt. The double reference of the "day" is in reality but one after all, for there were no such feasts celebrated under Saul, and David re-established the tabernacle services, and hence it is strictly but one: "This is the day which Jehovah hath appointed," viz: in commemoration of a great deliverance, and which deliverance is now double; "Let us therefore rejoice and be glad in it."

25. I beseech thee, Jehovah, O send Thou salvation :
I beseech thee, Jehovah, O send Thou prosperity.
26. Blessed be He that cometh in the name of Jehovah :
We have blessed you from the house of Jehovah.
27. Jehovah is God, and He hath caused light to shine on us :
Bind the festive sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.
28. Thou art my God, and I will render Thee thanks :
O my God, I will extol Thee.
29. O render thanks unto Jehovah ; for He is good :
For His mercy lasteth for ever.

Having supplicated the Lord for salvation and prosperity for his people in verse 25, David says, "Blessed be He that cometh in the name of Jehovah." This passage was always understood among the Israelites as referring exclusively to Messiah, the spiritual Chief Corner-stone of verses 22—23 ; and the exclamation of the Jews in presence of our blessed Saviour at his entrance into Jerusalem, a few days before that feast, at the observance of which this prophecy was first uttered by David, abundantly shows this, see Math. xxi. 9, xxiii. 39. The fact of the prophecy contained in verses 22 and 23 being so often quoted by our Saviour and his apostles, and often in connection with Isa. xxviii. 16, Matt. xxi. 42, Mark xii. 10, Luke xx. 17, Acts iv. 11, Eph. ii. 20, 1 Peter ii. 4, proves distinctly that David in this Psalm speaks as a type of his Son the Saviour, the great Passover Lamb, that was to be slain for the sins of the world. Hence the import of verse 26 must be this, "Whilst we have blessed you from the house of the Lord—from the sanctuary built with hands, at the celebration of the types (the blessing refers to the benediction pronounced by the king, priests, and Levites, as we see in Psalm cxv., in this book lxix. 12—15), a far greater blessing awaits you ; for "Blessed be He that cometh in the name of Jehovah ;" viz., the Messiah, the Antitype of this house, altar, ark, cherubim, sacrifices, and king. He shall bring you the real blessings from above. In Him, not an earthly king and earthly priests and Levites, but Jehovah himself, shall pronounce the benediction over his children through the reconciliation made by His great sacrifice : the great High priest of Jehovah's sanctuary shall sprinkle the mercy-seat once for ever with his precious blood : He shall pronounce a blessing over you, and bring you light and peace. After the sacrifices belonging to the altar, according to the order of the day, and the king's as well as the people's thank and burnt-offerings accompanying their vows were completed, the חַג (Chag) "the festive offerings" were slain, of which the blood and fat only were offered on the altar, and the people feasted upon the flesh, (see about "Chag," Exod.

xxiii. 18 ; about the general sacrifices of the feasts, Lev. xxiii. 38—39; Num. xxviii. 19—24, and xxix ; about the feasting of the people on such occasions, Deut. xiv. 22—26, xvi. 11, 14—17.) This is the meaning of "binding the Chag, the festive sacrifice to the horns of the altar," *i.e.* to be prepared for the people to feast upon and rejoice before Jehovah, "who hath caused the light of his salvation to shine on them."*

We come now to the last part of the festive Psalms, which belong to David's "Hallel," or song of praise, and which consists of an account of Jehovah's works in creation, and of references to His mighty and wonderful deeds, wrought for and shown to Israel in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness.

PS CXXXV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXXIII.

1. Halleluyah. Praise ye Jehovah.
Praise ye the name of Jehovah :
Praise ye, O ye servants of Jehovah.
2. Ye that stand in the house of Jehovah,
Even in the courts of the house of our God.
3. Praise ye Jehovah ; for Jehovah is good :
Sing ye to His name ; for it is pleasant.
4. For Jehovah hath chosen Jacob for himself,
Even Israel for His peculiar treasure.
5. Truly I am convinced that Jehovah is great,
And that our Lord is God above all.

* Dr Hengstenberg maintains, that this glorious Psalm "is mixed with a sound of melancholy and anguish," and that therefore it must have been composed after the return from the captivity ; and that what is said regarding "the chief corner stone," neither respects the Messiah nor is prophetic, but refers to the laying of the foundation of the temple. How could the poor handful of returned captives, still surrounded by bitter and deadly enemies, still enslaved by the Babylonian power, give utterance to the confident and triumphant language contained in the 10—12 verses ? How does that language correspond with the words of Nehemiah iv. 4, "Hear, O our God ; for we are despised," or, "became a spoil ?"—or with the mournings and lamentations of the people on the feast, as recorded in Nehemiah viii. 9—11 ?—or with the words of that broken-hearted servant of God in his prayer, ix. 36, "Behold, we are servants this day ; and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers. . . . we are servants in it ?"

Our readers will remember that we mentioned in another place, that Dr H. denies the authority of 1 Chron. xvi., where Psalms, or parts of Psalms, which were given out by David to be sung before the Ark, are distinctly described and assigns the composition of them to the period following the captivity. The same he does with all those Psalms which begin or end with the words, "Render thanks unto God, for he is good ; for his mercy lasteth for ever." But that such Psalms belong to David, we have the following irrefragable testimony in 2 Chron. vii. 6, at the dedication of Solomon's temple. "And the priests waited on their offices ; the Levites also with instruments of music of the Lord, which David the king had made to praise the Lord, because his mercy endureth for ever, when David praised by their ministry," &c. Now, would such testimony as this be called in question, even by honourable men of the world ? Would they treat any such passage in profane history thus ? Here the fact is stated, that David's Psalms, which began with the "Hallel of David," or his songs of praise commencing with the words, "To render thanks unto Jehovah, for his mercy lasteth for ever"—were sung in Solomon's temple. The statement is repeated in Ezra iii. 10, 11, that David's "Hallel," or the well known songs of praise belonging to David, were sung at the laying of the foundation of the temple.

6. All that Jehovah pleased He made ;
Both in the heavens, and on the earth,
In the wafers, and in all the deeps.
7. Causing vapours to rise from the ends of the earth :
He produceth lightnings with the rain :
He bringeth forth the wind from his treasures.
8. He smote the first-born of Egypt, both of man and beast.
9. He sent signs and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt,
On Pharaoh, and on all his servants.
10. He also smote many nations, and slew mighty kings ;
11. Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan,
And all the kingdoms of Canaan ;
12. And gave their land for an inheritance,
Even an inheritance to Israel His people.
13. O Jehovah, Thy name is eternal :
O Jehovah, Thy memorial is throughout all generations.
14. For Jehovah advocateth the cause of His people,
And will repent Himself concerning His servants.
15. The idols of the heathen are silver and gold,
The production of human hands.
16. They have mouths, but they speak not ;
Eyes have they, but they see not ;
17. Ears have they, but they hear not ;
There is also no breath in their mouth.
18. Like unto them shall be those that made them,—
Even all that put their trust in them.
19. O house of Israel, bless ye Jehovah :
O house of Aaron, bless ye Jehovah :
20. O house of Levi, bless ye Jehovah :
O ye that fear Jehovah, bless ye Jehovah.
21. Blessed be Jehovah out of Zion,
Who dwelleth in Jerusalem.
Halleluyah, praise ye Jehovah.

PS. CXXXVI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXXIV.

1. O render thanks unto Jehovah ; for He is good :
For His mercy lasteth for ever.*
2. O render thanks to the God of gods :
For His mercy lasteth for ever.

* The Hebrew words כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ (Ki Leolam Chasdo) mean either, as we render it, "For His mercy lasteth for ever," or "for everlasting is his mercy;" but there is no need of the supplement "endureth" as in the common version, for the "endureth" or "lasteth" is in the word "Leolam," and the Hebrew poets never speak in half words or broken phrases. The arrangement of this Psalm is for a double chorus, the one opening it with an invitation to praise and render thanks to Jehovah, and mentioning at the same time either some of His attributes or of His mighty works ; while the other responds as the ground of praise, "For his mercy lasteth for ever," i.e. He is still the same wonder-working God, and therefore highly to be adored.

3. O render thanks to the Lord of lords :
For His mercy lasteth for ever.
4. To Him who alone worketh great wonders :
For His mercy lasteth for ever.
5. To Him who by wisdom made the heavens :
For His mercy lasteth for ever.
6. To Him who spread out the earth above the waters :
For His mercy lasteth for ever.
7. To Him who made the great luminaries :
For His mercy lasteth for ever.
8. The sun to rule the day :
For His mercy lasteth for ever.
9. The moon and the stars to rule the night :
For His mercy lasteth for ever.
10. To Him who smote Egypt in their first-born :
For His mercy lasteth for ever :
11. And brought forth Israel from among them :
For His mercy lasteth for ever :
12. With a mighty hand, and an outstretched arm :
For His mercy lasteth for ever.
13. To Him who divided the Red Sea into parts :
For His mercy lasteth for ever :
14. And He made Israel pass through it :
For His mercy lasteth for ever :
15. And overthrew Pharoah and his host in the Red Sea :
For His mercy lasteth for ever.
16. To Him who led his people in the wilderness :
For His mercy lasteth for ever.
17. To Him who smote great kings :
For His mercy lasteth for ever :
18. And who destroyed the mighty kingdoms :
For His mercy lasteth for ever :
19. Even Sihon, king of the Amorites :
For His mercy lasteth for ever :
20. And Og, king of Bashan :
For His mercy lasteth for ever.
21. And He gave their land for an inheritance :
For His mercy lasteth for ever :
22. An inheritance unto Israel His servant :
For His mercy lasteth for ever :
23. To Him who remembered us in our low estate :
For His mercy lasteth for ever :
24. And hath redeemed us from our adversaries :
For His mercy lasteth for ever.
25. He giveth food to all flesh :
For His mercy lasteth for ever.
26. O render thanks to the God of heaven :
For His mercy lasteth for ever.

We come now to the second series of Psalms which David composed for a daily song of praise, to be performed by the Levites before the Ark of the Lord in His sanctuary. It extends from the cxlv. to the cl. inclusive. As we have stated elsewhere, the exact time of composition cannot be ascertained, but this is of less moment, inasmuch as they contain nothing which stands connected with any part of history to be illustrated by them. One thing is sure, that they are David's, and were composed for the temple service; and considering that not a single expression in them is characterized by any of the features which so peculiarly mark those Psalms which were written by him after his fall, they must belong to an earlier period, when lofty adoring praise and triumphant strains pervade his productions. We therefore thought this the most appropriate place to introduce them, forming as they do but one song of praise. Afterwards we shall proceed with David's history, and consider the most interesting portion of his Oracles, which are either strictly Messianic, or depend entirely on, and must be illustrated by, different occurrences in his life.

PS. CXLV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXXV.

A SONG OF PRAISE BY DAVID.

- ⌘ 1. I will extol thee, my God, and my King ;
And I will bless Thy name for ever and ever.
- ⌘ 2. Every day will I bless Thee ;
And I will praise Thy name for ever and ever.
- ⌘ 3. Great is Jehovah, and greatly to be adored ;
But His greatness is unsearchable.
- ⌘ 4. Generation to generation shall celebrate Thy works,
And they shall declare Thy mighty acts.
- ⌘ 5. Of the splendour of Thy glorious majesty,
And of the character of Thy wonderworks will I talk.
- ⌘ 6. While the power of Thy terrible acts they shall rehearse,*
I shall also declare Thy greatness.
- ⌘ 7. They shall commemorate Thine abundant goodness,
And of Thy righteousness they shall sing aloud.
- ⌘ 8. Gracious and full of compassion is Jehovah ;
Slow to anger and abundantly beneficent.
- ⌘ 9. Jehovah is good unto all ;
And His compassion is over all His works.
- ⌘ 10. All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Jehovah ;
And Thy devoted servants shall bless Thee.
- ⌘ 11. They shall converse of the glory of Thy kingdom ;
And of Thy mighty deeds they shall talk.
- ⌘ 12. To make known to the sons of men His mighty deeds,
And the splendour of His glorious kingdom.

* This clause, as well as the 7th verse, stands in connection with verse 4, "They shall rehearse." "they shall commemorate," &c., i.e., one generation to another, and every generation by itself.

- מ 13. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom ;
 And Thy dominion lasteth throughout all generations.*
 ד 14. Jehovah is the supporter of those that are falling ;
 And He raiseth up all those that are bowed down.
 ע 15. The eyes of all look hopefully unto Thee ;
 And Thou givest them their meat in due season.
 פ 16. Opening Thy hand, Thou satisfiest the desire of all living.
 צ 17. Jehovah is righteous in all His ways ;
 And abundant in mercy in all His works.
 ק 18. Jehovah is nigh unto all that call upon Him ;
 To all that call upon Him in truth.
 ר 19. He will fulfil the desire of those that fear Him :
 And their cry He will hear, and save them.
 ש 20. Jehovah preserveth all those that love Him :
 But all the wicked He will extirpate.
 ת 21. My mouth shall speak the praise of Jehovah :
 And all flesh shall bless His holy name for evermore.

PS. CXLVI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXXVI.

Halleluyah. Praise ye Jehovah.

1. Praise Jehovah, O my soul.
2. I will praise Jehovah while I live :
 I will sing praise to my God during my eternal existence.†
3. O put not your confidence in princes,
 In a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.
4. His breath departeth—he returneth to his earth ;
 In that day his contrivances perish.
5. Happy is he whose Help is the God of Jacob,
 Whose hope is in Jehovah his God ;
6. Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is therein—
 Who keepeth His truth to eternity.
7. Who executeth judgment for the oppressed ;
 Who giveth bread to the hungry.
 Jehovah releaseth the prisoners :
8. Jehovah openeth the eyes of the blind :
 Jehovah raiseth up those that are bowed down :
 Jehovah loveth the righteous :
9. Jehovah preserveth the strangers ;
 He defendeth the fatherless and the widow :

* This Psalm is regularly alphabetical, but the stanza which should follow verse 13 is wanting. Probably it was lost during the convulsions and destruction of Jerusalem, or during the captivity.

† On the word בְּעוֹלָם (Beodi), which we have rendered "during my eternal existence," compare the parallel passage in Ps. civ., in this book vii. 33, and exposition; also Ps. cxxxix. chronologically xevii. 18, where the same word occurs, and explanation.

But He subverteth the way of the wicked.

10. Jehovah shall reign for ever,
Even thy God, O Zion, throughout all generations.
Halleluyah. Praise ye Jehovah.

PS. CXLVII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXXVII.

1. Praise ye Jehovah ; for He is good :
Sing praise unto our God : for it is pleasant :
O how comely is praise !
2. Jehovah doth build up Jerusalem :
He gathereth the dispersed of Israel.*

* Here is another case in which commentators have concluded from two verses, that this Psalm must have been composed after the return from the Babylonish captivity ; and as they cannot overlook the connection of this group of the Halleluyah Psalms, they make captives of the whole of them. This erroneous conclusion is founded upon their misunderstanding of verses 2 and 13, which they apply to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and to the return of the captive Jews from Babylon. But to show their mistake, we notice, in the first place, that there is no mention of a "rebuilding," but of a "building" of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem was surely first built by David when he was made king over all Israel, and when they had recovered from that severe stroke which they received on the mountains of Gilboa, and from the lamentable condition into which that fatal war plunged them. We notice, secondly, that there is no mention of "captives" in the second verse, but that God would gather נִדְּחֵי (Nidechey), "the dispersed" of Israel; and we maintain that a greater number of dispersed Israelites must have returned to Judea during the victorious reign of David, than the numbers that returned from Babylon, both under Nehemiah and Ezra, &c. That Israel was fearfully scattered after Saul's death, we have the express passage of 1 Sam. xxxi. 7. "And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, and they that were on the other side of Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their cities and fled, and the Philistines came and dwelt in them." Now, if such was the terrible influence on Israel even beyond Jordan, we may easily conceive how many scores of thousands must have left their cities which bordered on Philistia, and fled to neighbouring countries of the heathen for refuge; and how many Israelites must have been captured by the victorious Philistines, and sent or sold into slavery. When David was made king over all Israel, and took Mount Zion from the Jebusites, he began to build a strong fortification round about it and Jerusalem, and smote the Philistines in two battles so completely that they never could raise their heads again. What, then, was more likely than that David should say, when his fortification around Zion and Jerusalem was finished: "Jehovah doth build up Jerusalem," or "Jehovah hath build up Jerusalem," or even "Jehovah who built up Jerusalem, gathereth again the dispersed of Israel," i.e. Israel who abandoned their cities to the Philistines and fled into exile, may now come back and dwell in safety in the land. And the same in verse 13, "For He hath strengthened, or made strong the bars of thy gates, and hath blessed thy children within thee." The last expression cannot apply to the captives from Babylon at all, for they continued in great distress in Jerusalem. (See the above argument enlarged on in the Introduction to this book, pp. 27—30.)

But internal evidence will prove that the application of the whole group of these Halleluyah Psalms to the returned captives, is erroneous. For we ask any one who is conversant with the miserable and oppressed condition of these captives under Nehemiah and Ezra—being surrounded by deadly enemies, who watched all their proceedings and every word they uttered, in order that they might find occasion to accuse them to the Persian kings, who had dominion over them, (Nehem. ii. 19, iv. 1—8, vi., &c.)—would they have ventured to give out a song like the cxlix., and declare openly, "Let the exaltation of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and inflict corrections on the nations; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron," &c.? Would not such language have been instantly declared seditious and treasonable against the Persian monarch? Would the poor Jews have ventured to express such sentiments even in private, without dread and trembling? We therefore justly conclude, that the cxlv. and the five following Psalms, are one Davidic song of praise, entitled at the beginning of the cxlv. תְּהִלָּה לְדָוִד (Tehilah Le David), "A song of praise by David."

And this "Tehilah of David" was used by the returned captives after the re-establishment of

3. He who healeth the broken hearted,
And bindeth up their wounds ;
4. He ordereth the number of the stars :
All of them He calleth by their names.
5. Great is our Lord, and glorious in His power ;
And His understanding is inexpressible.
6. Jehovah defendeth the meek :
But the wicked He casteth down to the ground.
7. O sing praise unto Jehovah with thanksgiving ;
Sing praise unto our God on the harp.
8. He who covereth the heaven with clouds,
Who prepareth rain for the earth,
Who maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains ;
9. He giveth food to the cattle,
Also to the young ravens, which cry for it.
10. He delighteth not in the strength of the horse ;
He hath no pleasure in the legs of a man.
11. But Jehovah hath pleasure in those who fear Him,
In those who wait hopefully for His mercy.
12. O Jerusalem, praise thou Jehovah :
O Zion, praise thou thy God :
13. For He hath made strong the bars of thy gates ;
He hath blessed thy children within thee.
14. He maketh peace in thy borders ;
He satisfieth thee with the best of wheat.
15. He sendeth His order upon earth :
How swiftly runneth His command !
16. He who giveth snow like wool !
He scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes ;
17. Casting forth His ice like morsels :
Who can stand before His cold ?
18. He sendeth forth His word, and melteth them.
He maketh His wind to blow, the waters flow.
19. He declareth His word unto Jacob,
His ordinances and His judgment unto Israel.
20. He hath not done so to any of the heathen nations :
As for His orders, they know them not.
Halleluyah. Praise ye Jehovah.

their temple services, as it is stated distinctly in Nehem. xii. 46, that שִׁיר תְּהִי-
 lah), "the song of praise" belonging to David, was sung (as we stated above, the cxlix. must
 have been omitted through fear); but there is not the slightest ground to conclude that
 "songs of praise" were ever added to the temple service after David.

PS. CXLVIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXXVIII.

Halleluyah, Praise ye Jehovah.

1. Praise ye Jehovah from the heavens ;
Praise Him in the heights.
2. Praise Him, all his angels :
Praise Him, all his hosts.
3. Praise Him, ye sun and moon :
Praise Him, all stars of light.
4. Praise Him, ye heaven of heavens,
And ye waters, which are above the heavens.
5. Let all those praise the name of Jehovah :
For He commanded, and they were created.
6. He also established them for ever and ever :
He gave an order, which they may never transgress.
7. Praise Jehovah from the earth, dragons and all deeps :
8. Fire and hail ; snow and vapour ;
The whirlwind that obeyeth his command :
9. Mountains, and all hills, fruit trees, and all cedars ;
10. Wild beasts and all cattle ; creeping things, and winged birds :
11. The kings of the earth, and all nations ;
Princes, and all the judges of the earth :
12. Both young men and maidens ; old men, and children :
13. Let them praise the name of Jehovah ;
For His name alone is to be extolled :
His majesty is above earth and heaven.
14. And He hath exalted the horn of His nation,—
The praise for all His devoted servants ;
For Israel His adopted nation.*
Halleluyah. Praise ye Jehovah.

PS. CXLIX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXXIX.

Halleluyah. Praise ye the Lord.

1. Sing a new song unto Jehovah—
His praise in the congregation of the saints.
2. Let Israel rejoice in his Maker :
Let the children of Zion exult in Their King.
3. Let them praise His name in the dance :
With timbrel and harp let them sing praises to Him.

* There is a noble idea in this verse, for its strictly literal meaning is, "And He lifted up a horn unto His nation," i.e., He whose "name alone is to be extolled" (verse 13) hath lifted up and exalted His nation. He gave a horn of exaltation into their hand; and for what purpose? Because by these means He "lifted up praise for, or, unto all His devoted servants," i.e., he put praise into their mouths—He provided them with materials and reasons for praise. This is then declared by "For Israel, or, even Israel His adopted nation;" i.e., their horn He hath exalted—into the mouth of Israel's saints He hath put praise. Hence the last call, Praise ye Jehovah, i.e., answer His purposes.

4. When He is well pleased with His nation,
He adorneth the meek with salvation.
5. Let the saints exult in glory :
Let them shout for joy upon their beds.
6. Let the exaltation of God be in their mouth,
And a two-edged sword in their hand ;
7. To execute vengeance upon the heathen,
And inflict corrections upon the nations ;
8. To bind their kings with chains,
And their nobles with fetters of iron ;
9. To execute upon them the judgment decreed.
He is the Ornament of all His saints.
Halleluyah. Praise ye Jehovah.

PS. CL. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXXX.

- Halleluyah. Praise ye Jehovah.
1. Praise ye Jehovah, because of His holiness :
Praise ye His power in the firmament.
 2. Praise Him, because of His mighty works :
Praise Him, according to the excellency of His greatness.
 3. Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet :
Praise Him with psaltery and harp.
 4. Praise Him with the timbrel in the dance :
Praise Him with stringed instruments and organ.
 5. Praise Him with loud sounding cymbals :
Praise Him with cymbals of jubilant sounds.
Let everything that breatheth praise Jehovah.
Halleluyah. Praise ye Jehovah.

THE EVERLASTING COVENANT MADE WITH DAVID, AND THE MESSIANIC PSALMS.

With the increasing prosperity of Zion's devoted king, there was also a corresponding increase of gratitude to the faithful God of his promises—with every opportunity that was afforded him of celebrating His praises, the deeper became his sense of his obligations to the Father of mercies, who had shown him His favour in such a wonderful manner. David began therefore to be uneasy about the situation of the Ark of the Covenant which he had placed in a tent with curtains, while he himself dwelt in the new and magnificent palace of cedar wood which Hiram, king of Tyre, had built for him. In the full enjoyment of peace, both domestic and national, he proposed to erect a splendid and durable edifice for the Ark of the Lord. This noble design he communicated to the prophet Nathan, who joyfully approved of it, and said, "Go, do all that is in thine heart ; for the Lord is with thee." But in vision by night the prophet was instructed of God to tell David, that although the good intention of his heart was ap-

proved of by Jehovah, yet he was not the man for building the holy temple of the Lord, because of the many wars in which he had been engaged, and the blood which had been shed by his hands. David, however, had no reason to be discouraged by this message, for it was accompanied with most cheering and glorious promises respecting himself and his posterity; nay, more than this, an everlasting covenant was entered into with him, such as was never made with any other of the human family either before or after him. Instead of his building a house for the most High, the Creator of the universe promised to "build a sure house" for him, which should not be shaken throughout eternity—promised to establish his seed after him who should be blessed with abundance of peace and great majesty, and who should build a temple unto Jehovah's name—and to establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. The last words of the Divine message to David were, "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever, or "unto eternity." 2 Sam. vii. 1—17. The inspired ambassador having delivered his glorious message, David, full of the devourest gratitude to God, immediately repaired to the tabernacle, and having placed himself before the veil of the Ark of the Covenant, broke out in the following strain of adoring thanksgiving: "Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God (*i.e.*, the temporal mercies bestowed on him hitherto, and the temporal promises for his descendant that would build God an house); but thou hast made promises for the house of thy servant, לְמֵרַחֵק (Le-Merachok) for distant ages," or "for a distant time to

come" (*i.e.*, promises which should receive their fulfilment at a remote period; and this must refer to the coming of the Messiah, in whom alone David's throne was to be established for ever): וְזֹאת תּוֹרַת הָאָדָם:

(Vezoth Torath Haadam), "And this is the instruction of Adam," or And this is the promise of which Adam was instructed, "O Jehovah, my Lord," (see more about this subject page 91): "And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Jehovah my Lord, hast greatly favoured thy servant." (verses 18—20). David's heart was so full of gratitude—his soul was so overwhelmed by the contemplation of such a great and blessed promise—that he could not well express himself in words. He did what he could—he poured forth his heart and soul before the throne of grace, and ended with the following words: "And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified for ever, that it may be said, The Lord of Hosts is the God over Israel; and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. For thou, O Lord of Hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house; therefore hath thy servant found the encouragement to pray this prayer unto thee. And now, O Jehovah, my Lord, thou art that God, and thy word is true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: Therefore now, let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it; and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever," (verses 25—29).

We need not dwell on the particulars of this wonderful transaction, nor on the reference of the covenant entered into with David to the Messiah, as

the magnificent, prophetic, and strictly Messianic Oracles, which owe their composition to this period of his life, and to the glorious revelation then made to him, will call upon us to compare them with the above passage in Samuel, and to illustrate and explain them mutually. The passage in itself contains several expressions, which show distinctly that David looked beyond the temporal parts of the promise for his descendants into the spiritual. And he could not do otherwise, seeing that the expressions, "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established FOR EVER BEFORE THEE; thy throne shall be established for ever"—must imply immortality, and that he himself should live for ever; else, how could his throne be established *for ever*, and also *before him*? So we see the same in the promise, that his house should be established for ever, and that the throne of his son, who was to build the temple of God, was to be established for ever and ever. Here also David could not but look to his great Son, the Messiah, the true David, the Beloved of God, the true Solomon, the Prince of Peace—the precious Corner-stone laid in Zion—the Builder of Jehovah's spiritual temple. Hence it was a spiritual house—a spiritual throne—a spiritual kingdom, which David must have understood in the words of the Covenant; and in this sense alone could the covenant be called everlasting, and be fulfilled *before David*, in his Son, in eternity.

In tracing the order of those holy oracles which were composed by David after the everlasting covenant was entered into with him, we find that the second Psalm must have been the first in order, and composed on the same day when Nathan the prophet delivered his heavenly message, and after David had poured forth his praises and thanksgivings before Jehovah in the tabernacle, as internal evidence will prove. Nevertheless, we cannot help thinking that the first Psalm is identical with the second, and forms an appropriate introduction to all the strictly Messianic Psalms. In it David shows the blessedness of the man who devoted his life to Jehovah and to the observance of His law, and the misery of the wicked and his lamentable end; and the least consideration will show us that the figures and sentiments it contains are an intended and striking contrast between David and his house, and Saul and his house. We are therefore persuaded that the first Psalm was written immediately after David's prayer in the tabernacle, in which he said, "Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" &c.; and that the second immediately followed it on the same day, as its own evidence will show.

PS. I. CHRONOLOGICALY PS. LXXXI.

1. Happy is the man, who walked not after the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stood in the way of sinners,
Nor sat in the assembly of the scornful :
2. But whose delight is in the law of Jehovah,
And who meditateth on His law day and night.
3. Such an one shall be like a tree planted by water streams,
Which bringeth forth his fruits in his due season :
Even his leaf shall not wither ;
And whatsoever he shall do shall prosper.

Solomon, in his Proverbs, i. 10, says, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not," or literally "wilt thou not," *i.e.*, say simply, "I will not." The force of this expression is, When wicked men try to persuade thee to follow their counsel, to walk in their ways, and to join them in their ungodly career—as Solomon describes it in verses 11—14, "When they say, Come with us. . . . We shall find all precious substance. . . . Cast in thy lot among us," &c., then the heavenly counsel is, "Wilt thou not," *i.e.* without arguing—without reasoning with them, say, "I will not," "I cannot." Depart from me, ye evil doers, I have a holy God to fear and serve, a soul to improve and save—my road is another than yours; I will not walk with you to destruction. Now the progress of wickedness may be divided into three branches; 1st, one's consenting to the enticers when persuaded by them to join in their evil-doings; 2d, the active practice of iniquity, to plunge along with them into sin and transgression; and 3d, the reaching such a climax of destruction and ruin as to become utterly hardened—to silence every demand of conscience—to banish every fear of a great Judge and a future judgment; yea, and to scorn revelation and law, warning and threatening. At this most fearful stage, the man is an entire victim of the father of lies—a child of the devil—bound in fetters of iron, and abandoned to everlasting destruction. This lesson is taught in the first verse of our Psalm. "Happy is the man who walked not after the counsel of the wicked," *i.e.* who took care not to give in at the first point—not to yield to the enticers and their persuasions; and what is the consequence of such a refusal? the man will not "have stood in the way of sinners;" עֲמַד בְּדֶרֶךְ (Amad Bederech), designates metaphorically, "a persisting in their practices." The third and last degree then follows. "Nor sat in the assembly of the scornful." All the three verbs in the first verse are in the past tense in the Hebrew text, "Halach," walked, "Amad," stood, "Yashav," sat; and the reason, probably, why they have been rendered in the present, is, that though the Psalm was intended for universal instruction, yet it was understood primarily to refer to David himself, who composed it, as we have stated above, after the extraordinary and glorious promises made to him in the everlasting covenant, in which he saw his integrity and devotion so richly rewarded. David was not led astray by the enticers among Saul's courtiers, nor by any wicked men of his band while he was a fugitive in the wilderness of Judea, nor by the princes and great men of Philistia, while he was an exile there. He neither consented to evil-doers, nor joined malefactors and blasphemers, but enwrapped himself in the laws and statutes of his God, and in them alone he put all his delight; so that, even in the midst of idolatrous Philistia, he was able to say, "In my heart have I stored up thy words, in order that I may not sin against thee. . . . In the way of thy testimonies have I rejoiced more than in all riches. . . . Even when princes sat conversing with me, thy servant meditated on thy ordinances," &c. Ps. cxix. in this book xxxvi. 11, 14, 23: compare the preface to that Psalm. The blessed results of such a behaviour as that described in the first two verses are stated in the third in a most magnificent figure: "Such an one shall be like a tree planted by water streams." The figure is rich, but when we turn to the object we shall find it exhaustless; for the water stream must be the celestial river of blessings whose spring is Jehovah, the Father and Benefactor of his righteous and devoted children. David was planted by that stream of living waters, and

every child of God derives the principle of his spiritual life from the same source. Equally exhaustless is the second part of the figure, which describes that man as "bringing forth his fruits in his due season." This figure must also be considered spiritually, but owing to the grandeur and extent of the subject we are obliged to leave the application untouched, and would only remind the reader to look carefully into David's compositions, and see what glorious and admirable fruits that tree produced. The second branch of the verse refers entirely, we think, to the object and not to the figure, for it could scarcely be said of the tree that its leaves would not wither; but when applied to the object it can extend to universal Christian practice, and be divided into many parts. But as for ourselves, we are quite satisfied that this third verse contains the substance of the covenant made with David—that Messiah, the tree of life in Jehovah's paradise, is the object that was to bring forth fruit in His own season—even His leaf was not to wither or decay, and all his doings were to prosper. Compare Isa. liii. 10, "He shall see His seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." (See Rev. xxii. 2; Ezek. xlvii. 12.)

4. The ungodly are not so :
But are like the chaff that is tossed by the wind.
5. Therefore shall the ungodly not stand the judgment,
Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
6. For Jehovah regardeth the way of the righteous :
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

The righteous man was represented in verse 3 as a sappy and formidable tree planted by the water streams, which implies its vigour and stability, being so firmly rooted that nothing can shake it. (See Jer. xvii. 8, which is the best commentary on this verse.) The figure may be taken to represent a twofold virtue and advantage in the object, viz. that the righteous is formidable in all his ways, opinions, and actions, for they are rooted in the law of God, which is their life, and their guide. But the wicked are described in verse 4 "as the chaff which is tossed by the wind," i.e. they have no stability in their principles—no rule in their actions—no guide in their way, but are tossed to and fro by the wind and tempest of their violence. Hence in verse 5 their end is described; "Therefore," shall the ungodly not stand the judgment," that is, as we apprehend, the great "judgment day." In this world, alas! we see too much of infidelity, and persecution, and violence, standing fast before the bar of judgment. How many monsters of the infernal Inquisition have stood fast to the last hour of their existence, maintaining their right to shed innocent blood in rivers? But there is a terrible Judge, whose eyes are like a flame of fire, before whose bar the ungodly shall not stand the judgment, but shall be confounded and overwhelmed, and in speechless horror be consigned to everlasting destruction. In the same sense must be understood the second clause, viz. that sinners shall not stand in the assembly of the righteous. Now we know likewise, that in this world many a wolf in sheep's clothing does stand in the assemblies of the saints; but on that great and terrible day, when all flesh shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, an infallible discrimination will take place, and the ungodly shall be separated from the righteous, and doomed with their master the devil and his angels to the

place of woe. In verse 6 another distinction between the people of God and the wicked is mentioned, viz. "because Jehovah regardeth, or approveth the way of the righteous," i.e. He leads them in all their ways—directs their steps into His sanctuary, and sanctifies all their actions for the promotion of His glory; while "the way of the ungodly shall perish," i.e. all their designs, actions, and machinations, all these shall perish along with them in time, for there is nothing in them but what is abominable; and therefore, also shall perish with them in eternity.

We have already stated our opinion that this Psalm, while it contains on its surface a glorious doctrine as well as most important lessons for the Church and world at large, has at the same time a primary reference to David as contrasted with wicked Saul. Hence we consider the 3d verse as having strict respect to David in the covenant, or rather to David in the Messiah, and it needs no better explanation than the following passage in Jehovah's promise to him: "and thy house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee." Here then we see how fit this Psalm is to be an introduction to the second, in which he asks: "Why then do the heathen rage," &c., i.e. seeing such are my promises, and such the doom of the wicked. That these Psalms stand in close connection may also be seen, not only from the absence of any title to the second, but from the similarity of the expressions in verse 6 of the one and verse 12 of the other, and still farther from their respective opening and concluding clauses. But we are satisfied of the sufficiency of the former reason to prove our argument, viz., seeing that such was Saul's doom, and that such shall be the doom of all wicked men, and that such is my glorious promise, "Why then do the heathen rage," &c.

PS. II. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXXXII.

1. Why do the heathen rage,
And why do the nations meditate vanity?
2. The kings of the earth array themselves,
And the princes enter into a formidable conspiracy
Against Jehovah, and against His anointed.
3. "Let us break asunder their bands,
And cast away their cords from us."
4. He who dwelleth in the heavens shall laugh:
Jehovah shall have them in derision.
5. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath,
And in His hot anger shall He confound them.
6. "It is I who have appointed my king
Over Zion my holy mountain!"

Here we have before us an oracle which resists all violent tempests of human invention. It exacts a confession from the unbelieving Jew that it must refer to Messiah, and forces a like acknowledgment from German rationalists, who in other Psalms sternly deny any reference to Christ and immortality.* David indeed showed in many earlier productions than

* It is lamentable to see intelligent and learned men losing themselves in the most glaring inconsistencies. The reader, who has seen the various quotations which we have made from

this, a thorough acquaintance with the Messiah's kingdom, and a clear knowledge of his relation to Him; but by the message he had received from on high through the prophet Nathan, the light became still brighter in his soul—the tie between him and Messiah stronger and more conspicuous—the plan of salvation, and Christ's dominion over the whole world, more certain and confirmed; and so he could more easily identify his own reign, with which the sceptre of Judah began temporally, with that of the great Shiloh, which was to perpetuate it throughout eternity spiritually.* Hav-

Dr Hengstenberg in the previous pages, in which he attempts to banish every reference to Christ and immortality (and not seldom he does so by sacrificing the true meaning of a phrase, and by introducing an entirely false translation), will perhaps be surprised to learn, that the present Psalm is not only acknowledged by him to be a Messianic production, but is even powerfully defended as such, and treated in a warm Christian spirit. In the same manner he acknowledged that Psalm cx. is strictly Messianic. We must confess, that after having compared his exposition of these two Psalms with the melancholy, daring, and poisonous statements he makes in others, we asked ourselves the question, Is it possible that a man, who acknowledges in a published book on the Psalms, that David foretold most important and most glorious things concerning the Messiah and his everlasting reign, should yet, in the same book maintain, that the inspired prophet had no clear knowledge of a future state, and would not exchange the vanities of this world for eternal glory? How weak is man! How inconsistent and self-contradictory! O that he would yield a childlike obedience to the truth of the holy God! We need only mention specially here Dr Hengstenberg's exposition of Psalms xxii. and lxxiii. What, we would ask him, must David have understood under the name Messiah, or Christ, of whom he so distinctly prophesied? What use was there of a Messiah if the soul be not immortal. But it is needless to say more. Happy it would be indeed, if German as well as other rationalists were brought to see with the eyes of the holy devoted apostle Paul, and to determine like him, to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

* There is another class of writers, older in existence than German rationalists, whose disposition is purely Christian, yet whose opinions about the Psalms, though anything but rationalistic, are, nevertheless, in some respects not less grievous and absurd, though not so dangerous. We mean those who maintain that a Psalm cannot refer to David and Christ at one and the same time, which they call "a double reference," and the existence of which they deny. Now, we confess that we never thought to maintain a "double reference" in any Messianic Psalm, though we have no doubt (nor had the apostles any doubt) that many Psalms refer to David, and to Christ in him as his descendant, and the eternal heir of his throne, or to Christ, and to David in Him as his father according to the flesh. The "double reference" we find in those men who call it so, because their mind is divided from the subject; but these Psalms are not divided, for they speak of only one subject after all. To illustrate our argument, we would ask such, Would they say that the sin-offering could not typify Christ because Christ and it were different? Would they call that a "double reference" when we say, that the High Priest entering the Most Holy, and sprinkling the mercy-seat with the typical blood of sprinkling, represented Christ entering the heavenly sanctuary with his precious blood to make an atonement once for ever? Would they say that this could not typify Christ because Christ was a different person? Will they say that Zion cannot signify typically the Church, or the heavenly Zion, because Zion was a visible mountain, and it cannot have a "double reference"? Will they deny that Israel in prophetic language often means, not only literal Israel, to whom the name originally belonged, but the true Israel of God? But all these illustrations are far from being strong enough, or nearly equal to the relation between David and Christ. While the whole nation of Israel was a typical nation, Mount Zion a visible and typical place, and all Israel's institutions typical only of Christ, and, as the apostle calls them, "shadows of good things to come, the substance of which is Christ"—David's relation to Christ was quite different; it was not merely as a type to its antitype, but as a royal father to his son and successor to his throne. Jehovah began the salvation of the world by choosing himself a typical Israel, but it was to end in a spiritual; and still it is called Israel:—He chose Mount Zion as His dwelling place under the typical dispensation; it was to end in antitypical and spiritual Zion, and still it is called Zion, still it is one and the same:—He chose David the temporal prince of typical Israel, whose throne was to be inherited by his Son, the everlasting King of spiritual Israel. Now, although what was temporal in David is eternal in his Son, still it was the same throne, the same kingdom, and the same royal house, though it began temporal and ended spiritual; for the temporal would never have been established, had not the spiritual been anticipated to come from it. Lastly, suppose that when David had resolved to put Solomon on his throne, the heathen nations had declared war against Israel, would it have been a wrong expression if David had then said, "The heathen rage against our throne" (i.e. his and Solomon's, who was to succeed him)? Would any one object to such an expression as being a "double reference"? If not, why object to those

ing received the infallible promise that his kingdom and his throne were to be established for ever, and having probably also received intelligence of the confederation of the heathen nations along with the Philistines to overthrow his supremacy over the latter, which he had gained in his two successive victories over them and their auxiliaries, David exclaims in a triumphant tone, "Why do the heathen rage?" or, Why do the heathen raise such a tumult? "and why do the nations meditate vanity," or devise foolishness? *i.e.* why do they trouble themselves in devising plans against me, seeing that my kingdom is now identified with that of the great Shiloh the God-man, the King and Priest, and that any attempt against me is a direct rebellion against the omnipotent, "God and His Anointed?" Now the "anointed" here refers to David as distinctly as to his spiritual successor, in the same way as the opposition raised by the heathen nations against the former was applied by the apostles also to the opposition raised by the Jews and Romans against his Son Jesus. (Acts iv. 25.) But whilst David represents the confederated nations as saying to one another, "Let us break asunder their bands," &c., *i.e.* let us overthrow the authority of the God of Israel and His anointed King, he at the same time represents God as laughing their conspiracy to scorn, by anticipating their lamentable end. (Comp. Ps. xxxvii. chronologically xxxv., also Ps. lix. chronologically Ps. xi.) The word **אָז** (Oz), "then," refers to the time when the confederates should be quite ready with their plans, and prepared for battle, as Jehovah always waits until his enemies are at the highest point of their imagined success; and then He sends the rays of His omnipotence and confounds them, and destroys their plans and devices. So He did with Israel's foes at the Red Sea, in the wilderness, and in Canaan; so He did with those of David; and so He has done, and will do, with the enemies of Christ and His church. When danger seems most imminent—when God's children cry unto Him from the depths of the uttermost distress—when the powers of darkness think their triumph quite secure, then the salvation of the former is nearest, and the destruction of the latter close at hand. "Then," says David, when they be quite ready in array with their chariots and instruments of war, "then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and in His hot anger shall He confound them." The Lord is then represented as saying to the rebels in His anger, "It is I:" *i.e.* I the omnipotent Creator and Governor of the Universe, the King of Kings, who deal according to my pleasure with heaven's hosts, "It is I who have appointed my king over Zion my holy mountain;" *i.e.*, I have appointed David as king over my chosen people Israel—I have planted him on my beloved mount Zion—I have entered into an everlasting covenant with him that his Son should inherit his throne for ever, and be the great spiritual King over my spiritual Israel on the heavenly Mount Zion: Who then will not tremble to rise in rebellion against me? Some commentators render the word **נָשַׁכְתִּי** (Nasachthi) "I have anointed," but it never had such a meaning. The primary signification of it is "to pour." Hence it is often used to denote the pouring of metal into the mould to

Psalms in which David identifies his throne, his reign, and his cause with those of the Messiah? The very nature of the everlasting covenant made with David was such, that any opposition to his throne was a direct opposition to Messiah's kingdom.

fashion anything. It has also several other metaphorical meanings. In our passage it signifies, a "fixed appointment" of God which even the gates of hell shall not be able to undo. The Psalmist then proceeds to show that what he had stated in this part of the Psalm was by the authority of God.

7. Let me declare the decree, Jehovah hath said unto me,
Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.
8. Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations as thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
9. Thou shalt bruise them with an iron sceptre ;
Thou shalt shatter them like a potter's vessel.

Such was David's authority over the rebellious heathen conspirators ; not the power of his army was it that he arrays against them, threatening them with destruction—not by an arm of flesh does he claim obedience from them ; but by the authority of the almighty Jehovah who had entered into an everlasting covenant with him—who had promised him that his throne should be established for ever, and who was introduced in verse 6 as saying in majesty, "It is I who have appointed my king over Zion my holy mountain." In verse 7 therefore David proceeds to show what he meant by the appointment of God, and how God had appointed him King, not for a short period, as was the case with Saul, but for ever and ever : אֶסְפְּרָה אֶל-דָּוִד (Asaprah El-Chok), "Let me declare or relate the decree," *i.e.*, the irresistible decree by which Jehovah has appointed me king of Zion, and father of my everlasting Successor the Messiah, the Son of God. "Jehovah hath said unto me (by the prophet Nathan) thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee." The reference here is evidently to 2 Sam. vii. 12—14 ; compare Ps. lxxxix. 26, in both of which passages David and his descendants are the types of the Son of God, the Messiah. Hence he says, "I have this day begotten thee," the day when the everlasting covenant was communicated to David by heaven's irresistible decree. But the apostle Paul tells us that there was a further reference in these words—that they not only refer to the covenant entered into with David, but to that entered into in eternity with the Son of God, to whom, when, according to the Father's promise, he became the "first-born from the dead," the Ancient of Days said, "Thou art my Son," *i.e.*, thou wast obedient to thy Father, even unto the death on the cross, therefore was I faithful in raising thee to everlasting glory : "this day have I begotten thee." Acts xiii. 33 ; Heb. i. 5. Inasmuch as unto this Son was said, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make all thine enemies thy footstool," David's victory over conspiring heathen against his Divinely-established kingdom was also secured ; and in Jesus, the heir of his throne, he could well say that Jehovah said to him, "Ask of me, I will give thee nations as thine inheritance," &c. So David goes on to show them in verse 9 that their struggle would not only be in vain, but fraught with misery and destruction, and therefore he advises them in the last three verses to yield obedience, and not lift up the sword of rebellion against the arm of Omnipotence.

10. Now, therefore, be wise, O ye kings:
Be instructed, O ye judges of the earth.
11. Serve Jehovah with fear, and rejoice with trembling.
12. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye lose the way;
For within a little while his wrath shall be kindled.
Happy are all those who take shelter in him.

Having foretold the rebels the fearful doom which certainly would befall them if they should continue in their rebellion against him whom Jehovah had invested with power and authority over them, he goes on to warn them; exhorting the kings and rulers of the earth to be wise, and receive timely instruction, and serve Jehovah with fear. This evidently stands in allusion to verses 2 and 3, where the conspirators were represented as plotting a rebellion against God and His anointed, in order to shake off from them His authority. David therefore tells them, that if they have not wisdom enough to serve the Lord in His appointed way, out of pure love to such a good and merciful God, still it was better for them to serve Him for fear of the certain destruction which would suddenly overtake them if they refused. In the same sense we understand also the second clause in verse 11, "and rejoice with trembling;" but the words **וְיִלָּץ**

בְּרַעְדָּה (Vegilu Biradah) may also mean, "and rejoice *in* trembling," the meaning of which may be—seeing that your ignorance prevents you from serving him out of pure love, begin then to serve him out of fear, for the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom; and rejoice in your very trembling; for even to serve him trembling is a happier thing, and will end better than any attempt to shake off his fear, for such an attempt must end in destruction. Verse 12. "Kiss the Son." Now, we understand the Hebrew verb **נָשַׁק** (Nashak) more frequently to signify "to embrace" than "to kiss," (the primary meaning of it being "to touch" one another, &c.) We have left the usual word in the text, merely because the ancient mode of kissing implied also an embracing. How this can apply primarily to David is easily understood, but the farther application to the real Son of God is very sublime: "Embrace the Son," embrace Him as your beloved Saviour, King, and Shepherd of your soul; yea, embrace Him as the only way to salvation, and to a happy eternity, "lest He be angry, **וְתִאָּבֶדְךָ דֶּרֶךְ** (Vethovdu Derech), and ye lose the way," (perish from the way is an erroneous rendering, and is not in the text), *i.e.* wander on the mountains of destruction. Embrace Him therefore, and follow Him hard while it is time, for "Happy are all those who take shelter in Him."

Psalm xxi. appears to us to be next in order of composition after the everlasting covenant was ratified to David through Nathan the prophet. It consists of the highest expression of gratitude to God for the extraordinary promises made to him; and whilst he exults in Jehovah on account of his privileges, he anticipates the glory and exaltation and triumph of his great descendant the Messiah, in whom alone the covenant promises were to reach their height—to become yea and amen, and eternally glorious.

PS. XXI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXXXIII.

(Lamnatzeach) "To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A SONG OF PRAISE BY DAVID.

1. O Jehovah, in thy strength the King rejoiceth :
O how exceedingly doth he exult in thy salvation !
2. The desire of his heart thou hast granted unto him ;
And the request of his lips thou hast not denied him ;
Selah, always.

The Selah here refers chiefly to the substance of the first clause in verse 2, viz. "The desire of his heart thou hast *always* granted unto him." But in the Hebrew text it fits admirably even the second clause, for as we have often stated, the Selah has such a power and comprehensiveness that it influences and strengthens the sense of all the preceding ideas in the sentence at the close of which it occurs. Now the substance of verse 2 is this, "The desire of the king's heart, and the request of his lips, hast thou *never* denied, but Selah, *always*, granted to him." The reason why the king rejoices in Jehovah's strength, and exults in His salvation, is, because he (the king) reaps the benefit of it—for Jehovah by His strength reaches salvation unto him—the almighty Jehovah is able and willing to fulfil the desire of his heart and the request of his lips. (See Psalm xxvii. chronologically Ps. lxiv. 4, 5, and exposition.) The reason why David here uses the third person, "the king," is because he speaks of "the king" of the covenant and his everlasting reign, beginning with David, and ever continuing in Emmanuel, as shall be explained next. (See the foot-note on preceding Ps., page 370.) He then proceeds to explain more at large the reason of his joy and exultation in Jehovah.

3. For thou dost meet him with the choicest of blessings :
Thou settest on his head a crown of the purest gold.
4. He asked life of thee ; thou hast granted him
An extent of days throughout infinite eternity.
5. Great is his glory through thy salvation :
Splendour and majesty dost thou confer on him.
6. For thou wilt appoint him for eternal blessings :
Thou wilt brighten his joy with thy countenance.
7. Because the king trusteth in Jehovah ; therefore,
Through the mercy of the Most High,
He shall never be moved.

It is impossible for any attentive reader not to discover on the very surface of these verses a type and antitype, a royal father and a royal Son—man and God—a beginning in time, and an ending in eternity—a beginning with temporal honour and splendour, and an ending with spiritual ever-flourishing glory and majesty in the presence of Jehovah Zebaoth, where there is fulness of joy and celestial pleasures for evermore. The king

spoken of, therefore, is the king of David's covenant, with whom the sceptre of Judah began to be established in time, and would extend spiritually throughout eternity. It is therefore one king, as it is one house which Jehovah promised to build unto David, with whom that kingdom began; and as the kingdom is but one, "and thy house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee," so David here speaks of one "king" of Judah's tribe; and though he begins to speak of matters concerning himself, still as his prosperity and blessing depended on the Messiah in whom alone they could be perpetuated, the one king typified the other. That king, says David, in verse 3, was met by the Lord with the choicest of blessings, and a crown of the purest gold was set on his head. This was fulfilled to David only in his Son the Messiah, as the illustration follows in verse 4, "He asked life of thee: thou hast granted him an extent of days throughout infinite eternity." David asked life, not only when his life was in imminent danger under Saul, but even when already on his throne he asked the Lord to prolong his life, in order that he might have time to praise Jehovah for His goodness in the land of the living (see Ps. xxvii., chronologically lxiv. 4; Ps. cxvi., or lxx. 9; Ps. cxviii., or lxxii. 17, &c.). In answer to his petition, Jehovah promised him an everlasting life of happiness and glory, and everlasting continuance of his throne and majesty in Emmanuel his Son, whose glory and splendour were to be great in Jehovah's salvation. In verse 6 he shows that Emmanuel is to be appointed for the world's "eternal blessings," which refers evidently to the promise made to Abraham, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed; and David saw that that blessed King was to be his Heir and Descendant. Regarding the second clause, that Messiah's joy (and David's in him) was to be brightened by Jehovah's countenance, compare Ps. xvi., chronologically lxxxv. 11. In the second part of this Psalm David turns to his blessed Descendant and Antitype, and addresses him in person, showing how certain his victories are over his enemies:—

-
8. Thy hand shall be sufficient against all thine enemies;
Thy right hand shall be sufficient against those that hate thee.
 9. Thou shalt make them as a furnace of fire,
In the time of thine appearance: *
Jehovah in his wrath shall swallow them up;
And the fire shall devour them.
 10. Their progeny thou wilt destroy from the earth,
And their seed from among the children of men.

* Many groundless and false interpretations of this noble phrase have been given and suggested by commentators, and we cannot understand what ailed them at the literal translation and its sublime meaning. לְעֵת הַפִּיּוּץ (Leeth Pauecha) mean nothing else but "in the time of thy appearance, or presence;" and it must refer to the last judgment when King Messiah shall come in all his glory with his celestial retinue to judge the earth. The King Messiah must be the person here addressed by David, and to whom he says, that his hand, *i.e.*, his power, shall be sufficient against all his enemies—that he shall subdue them by his own omnipotence, though Jehovah the Father is represented as executing the judgment pronounced by the Son by devouring the wicked rebels in a flame of fire.

11. When they shall have aimed evil at thee ;
When they shall have framed mischief against thee—
They shall not be able to accomplish it.
12. For Thou shalt make them turn their back,
When Thou shalt make ready Thy bowstrings against their face.
13. Exalt Thyself, O Jehovah, in Thy strength,
That we may sing praise, and chaunt of Thy Omnipotence.

We observe that verses 11 and 12 lie greatly in the way of Christian expositors, their error being that they understand them as referring to David's enemies ; and hence they have marred the whole second part of the Psalm. But we are sure that a better acquaintance with the Hebrew than they seem to have possessed, would have showed that the whole of this part refers to Messiah, and to His victory over his enemies, who are represented in verse 11 as seeking to overthrow him by all wicked means and devices within their reach, but in vain. The words **כִּי נָטוּ אֶלְיָהָ רָעָה** (Ki Natu Alecha Raah) are not to be understood in the past but in the future perfect tense : " When they shall have aimed evil against thee," *i.e.* when they shall have done all in their power to overthrow thee—when all their devices shall have been put in operation, and all their wicked plans exhausted, then they shall find that they have to do with a stronger arm than theirs, that they cannot accomplish what they undertook. The reason follows in verse 12, for as soon as thou shalt prepare the strings of thy bow in, or against their face, they shall instantly turn their back, and seek their safety in flight. Then shall thine hand be sufficient against them (as in verse 8) ; thou shalt overtake them—lay hold on them—condemn them ; and the wrath of a righteous Jehovah shall devour them.

We take up three Psalms next, which are strictly Messianic, and all glorious. These are in the common order, the lxxxvii., xvi., and cx. The last two will be known to our readers as Messianic, though the xvi. has been sadly misunderstood in its former part, and erroneously interpreted. But though we are aware that the lxxxvii. is not usually considered Messianic, yet we think, and hope the reader will see, that it is a most glorious Oracle regarding the Messiah. The order in which we put them is not because we pretend to have found out that their composition followed thus each other as to time, but because their sentiments and Messianic references follow each other consecutively. While it will be shown as we go over it, that Ps. lxxxvii. celebrates the coming of Messiah into the world, the xvi. is well known as celebrating His triumphant resurrection, and the cx. as referring to His glory after having entered heaven with his rich spoil, to sit down in everlasting majesty at the right hand of Jehovah the Father.

Before entering on the translation and exposition of this wonderful song of Zion, we must remark that not only have expositors failed to compre-

hend its meaning, but they have obscured and perverted it by taking the Hebrew superscription or title, and constituting it the first verse. This has cast an obscurity upon the whole Psalm; for what meaning is there in beginning a Psalm with the words, "His foundation is in the holy mountains?" If it be asked, what means the foundation? whose foundation is it, that is in the holy mountains? none could tell. Expositors have failed in all their attempts to impart a just and rational meaning to the expression; and this is not to be wondered at when the title of the Psalm has been made the first verse of it.*

Now the title according to the Hebrew text reads thus, "A vocal song of praise for the sons of Korah," יִסְדָּתוֹ (Yessudatho) "whose foundation," *i.e.*, the foundation or subject of the song "is on the holy mountains," *viz.* Zion and Moriah, of which the song treats, and to which it is dedicated. This indicates neither more nor less than as we would say, "Thompson the Poet composed a song or poem, whose foundation or subject is The Seasons," *i.e.* that "The Seasons" are the basis on which he erected the structure of his poem. The word יִסָּד (Yassad) is used by us to this day to denote the composition of שִׁיר (Shir) "a song or poem," and usually we meet the superscriptions of old compositions in Hebrew, as הַשִּׁיר הַזֶּה (Hashir Hazeh) this poem, or this song יִסָּד (Yassad) was composed, or founded, by Rabbi R. or Rabbi M. So with respect to our Psalm, which was composed by David regarding the holy mountains Zion and Moriah, and given to the sons of Korah to be performed by them, we have the whole of this fact intimated in the title. The reason why Yessudatho, "His foundation," is masculine, is because it refers to Shir, "song or poem," which is masculine in the Hebrew language. We must also remark, that under "Zion" Moriah was comprehended, which we may learn from the fact that although the temple was built on Moriah, still Zion was called the mountain on which Jehovah dwelt, because it included Moriah. Although in the title, therefore, we have both mountains, yet in the Psalm, "Zion" is used to denote them both.

PS. LXXXVII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXXXIV.

A VOCAL SONG OF PRAISE FOR THE SONS OF KORAH, WHOSE BASIS IS ON THE HOLY MOUNTAINS.

1. Jehovah loveth the gates of Zion
Above all dwellings of Jacob.
2. Glorious things are spoken regarding thee,
O thou city of God. Selah, for ever.

* We have neither time nor space to quote even a few of the wild ideas and conjectures that have been formed regarding the first verse (as it is called) of this Psalm. Hengstenberg in his *Cabaltistic* preface to it, as well as in his exposition, professes to give a "view of considerable importance," which view consists in enumerating the words of the verses in order to find out a numerical arrangement of them; and where he finds too many, he tries to couple two into one, thus of course discovering only an absurdity, as the Jewish cabalists practised where they did not understand the text. This important view Dr H. calls "an artificial structure," but we would designate it a foolish invention.

The inspired poet, who intimated in the title that he was to sing of the holy mountains which were both included under Zion, reflects on the glory of Zion and its grand destiny under the spiritual reign of the Messiah, according to the everlasting covenant which the Lord had entered into with him. He then contrasts the destiny of Zion—which name was to be perpetuated under the Messianic reign, and to be kept in honour and reverence throughout all Christian ages, not only because it was the cradle of the Church of God, first temporal and then spiritual, but also because the Messiah was to be its great and everlasting king—with the dwellings of Jacob, the chosen people of God, but which peculiarity and honour were to be dissolved in forgetfulness as soon as the partition-wall should be removed, and all heathen nations invited by Zion's king to come and partake of the sure mercies of David, without money and without price. While Jacob was to cease from being a peculiar people as soon as the Messiah's kingdom should begin, and His law should go forth from Zion, to all nations, Zion, on the contrary, was never to cease from being the holy symbol of the Church of God—the beloved object of His children—the centre of their devotional affection and their dearest motto. Regarding Zion, Jehovah said, "This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it. . . . There will I make the horn of David to bud," or literally, There will I make the horn of David to spring forth, (*i.e.* the Messiah his Son shall be born there): "There have I ordained a lamp for mine anointed." Ps. cxxxii. 13—17. Considering all this David says, "Jehovah loveth the gates of Zion above all dwellings of Jacob." He says "the gates of Zion," because by them the saints came in and ascended the holy mountain to praise Jehovah in the sanctuary; and so it is with spiritual Zion. (Compare Isa. lx. 18; Ps. cxxii.) Verse 2. "Glorious things are spoken regarding thee." The word מְדַבֵּר (Medubar) signifies "oracular communications, or heavenly decrees," by which Zion's destiny to eternal glory was made known. "O thou city of God, Selah, for ever;" *i.e.* O thou eternal city of God. Now, as we have seen that Messiah was to establish Zion's glory, and to render it spiritual and perpetual, and as Zion was destined to be the seat of the first Christian Church, whence the call to everlasting salvation should issue to all heathen nations, David proceeds to exhort all such nations to watch and look out for that glorious era when the great King Messiah should be born there, who alone could change them (if they embrace him) from aliens and outcasts into children of God and citizens of the true and heavenly Zion.

3. Let me remind Rahab and Babylon among those who know me :
Behold, O Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia ;
This One shall be born there.*

* The word אֶזְכִּיר (Azkir) means here, "Let me remind," or, "Let me put in, or bring to remembrance," *i.e.*, Let me remind them to watch carefully for the promised Messiah, who is to be an ensign to the nations to call to repentance and salvation. Such is the meaning of the word in Is. xliii. 26, הִזְכִּירֵנִי (Hazkireni), "remind me," or "put me to remembrance;" and so in many other places. The word לִידָעִי (Leyodai) implies that both parties know each other, but it does not always imply an intimate acquaintance and mutual friendship, as 1 Sam. x. 11, כָּל יוֹדָעִי (Kol Yodoh), "all that knew him," though not intimate friends, for the context does by no means imply it. As David was to remind the neighbouring heathen nations.

4. And regarding Zion it shall be said,
This Man, even this Man, was born there ;
And He doth establish her on high.
5. Jehovah shall record in the scriptures of the nations,
This One was born there, Selah, for ever.*

Seeing that Zion's glory was to be established for ever by Messiah, the King thereof, and Saviour of the world, and that the heathen, who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and sat for thousands of years in darkness, and in the shadow of death, were to be enlightened by the radiant beams that were to shine from Zion hill, and to be instructed in the way of salvation by the "Law" and by the "Word of God" that were to issue from thence, David reminds them to watch and wait eagerly for that glorious period when Zion's promised King should be born there. "Let me remind Rahab (or Egypt) and Babylon, among those who know me, Behold, or pay attention, O Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia, this One," *i.e.* the great One—the promised One of my covenant—the great Redeemer—the King and Saviour of the world, "shall be born there," *viz.*, in Zion (see Ps. ii., in this book Ps. lxxxii. 6; comp. Isa. xii. 6, xxxiii. 20, xxxv. 10, xl. 9—10, lii. 7, lix. 20; Micah iv. 2, 8; Zech. ii. 10, 11, &c.). The Psalmist then goes on to show in what Zion's glory was to consist, "And of Zion it shall be said, **אִישׁ וְאִישׁ** (Ish Veish), this Man, or the Great Man, even the Great Man,"—the promised Man—the Great Saviour—the God-man, "was born there **וְהוּא** (Vehu), and He," *i.e.* that Great Man that was born in Zion, **יְהוֹנָה עֲלִיּוֹן** (Yehonneha Elyon) "shall establish her on high," *i.e.* raise her to eternal glory. These were the "Glorious things spoken regarding Zion," *viz.*, that the great Messiah was to be born there—that *Jehovah Zidkenu* was to be her "everlasting light, and her God her glory." Isa. lx. 19. In verse 5, the Psalmist tells us how this fame and glory of Zion would be perpetuated, *viz.*, by Jehovah's inspiring "the holy men of God" to write down in the Scriptures of the nations (the gospels,

who knew him well as Israel's king and Jehovah's anointed, that they should wait in hope for the Messiah, his Descendant and their Saviour, so he would also remind the more distant nations, or those who in these days were less acquainted with Israel's kings and transactions, that they should also prepare for the time of the heathen's visitation, when salvation should be offered to them by Zion's King. **זֶה** (Zeh) is always emphatic, and points to a certain individual, "Behold," or "pay attention," *viz.* ye nations; for "this One," the promised Saviour—the blessed Redeemer—the Emmanuel—the Desire of all nations, shall be born there, *viz.* in Zion. We have rendered **יָלַד** (Yulad) in the future here, for it contains the promise, while in the next two verses it speaks of the time after the fulfilment of the promise. The certainty of fulfilment makes the language of prophecy often speak in the past, as if already fulfilled, even a distant promise. Comp. Is. ix. 6; Judg. xiii. 8.)

* **בְּכִתְבֵי עַמִּים** (Bichthov Ammin), "in the writings, or scriptures of the nations." As this recording must refer to the influence of the Spirit upon those inspired men, who were to write down these scriptures for all nations, and to record the history of the great King of Zion, therefore "Bichthov" is used instead of "Bamechtov," for the influence of Jehovah's Spirit was at the time of writing, and not when the holy Document was ready. Strange and surprising as this peculiar prophecy may seem at first, we are persuaded that the passage in the original neither has, nor can have, any other meaning, and the striking fulfilment of it proves its propriety, and that there is nothing hid from the eye of prophecy.

which have been written for all nations, and not as the law was at first, which was given to Israel alone), that "this One was born there," *i.e.* that the Messiah was born in Zion. These Scriptures or records must perpetuate the glory of Zion, for they shall last, Selah, for ever.

The prophet Isaiah says in Jehovah's name (ii. 2), that in the latter days "the mountain of the house of God (which means Zion, with Moriah included), shall be established above all mountains, and all nations shall flow unto it," and how wonderfully has this been already fulfilled! There is surely no mountain too high, no river too broad, no sea too raging, and no distance too great to separate the soul of a devoted praying Christian from Zion, where his Saviour was born and died, and rose again to glory and everlasting majesty on Jehovah's throne in heaven. We have repeatedly observed that the word Selah, has not only its appropriate meaning wherever it occurs, as "always," or "continually," or "for ever," but that it was also a pause-mark for the vocal singers where they should stop for rest, while the playing bands elevated the melody to the highest degree (see end of Introduction, page 31.) Now this Psalm is styled **מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר** (Mizmor Shir), "A Vocal Song of praise," which means merely that the vocal bands should have the chief lead in the performance of it, but which did not exclude instrumental music altogether. At the end of our Psalm (which is a song of praise to Zion), and after the second Selah, a direction is given to the singers as well as to the instrumental musicians, not only to elevate the tone with great shouts at the Selah, but also to exclaim **כֹּל מַעְיַי בְּךָ** (Kol Maayney Boch), which means "All fountains are in thee," *i.e.* in thee, thou glorious Zion, are all fountains of salvation—of deliverance—of love—of instruction—of light and splendour—of happiness and glory: all come forth from Zion, where the great King Messiah was born, and which He has exalted and established on high. So the last line should be arranged thus:

VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSICIANS.

6. All fountains are in thee.

The first line being understood as a mere mark for both the choruses to exclaim the second line, at the shout that accompanied the Selah.

PS. XVI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXXXV.

A MICHTAM OF DAVID.*

1. Guard me, O God, for I have taken shelter in Thee.

We have here another instance in which commentators have laid hold on a single phrase, and even a word, in a Psalm, the import of which they seem to have misunderstood, and from the meaning they have attached to it, have drawn a conclusion equally unfounded and erroneous. Because in the common version this Psalm begins with the words, "Preserve me,"

* The reader will find a full description of the meaning of the word "Michtam," in the preface to Psalm lix., in this book xi., page 80.

they have decided that it must have been composed in circumstances of great distress. But supposing that these words did indicate distress, there is not another word from beginning to end of the Psalm but is expressive of living faith, consolation, hope, joy, and triumph. But they indicate no such thing. Would there be any impropriety in a child of God, even in a state of the highest temporal and spiritual enjoyment, saying to Jehovah, "Preserve me, O God?" Who else can preserve him in comfort, hope, and happiness but the God of Israel, the Preserver of men?*. However, the real rendering of the word is not "preserve," but "guard;" and if we remember that we have here to do with a holy Oracle of Jehovah's sanctuary of the highest importance, and in the highest degree Messianic—that it was given to the Psalmist by inspiration (as the apostles Peter and Paul testify, Acts ii. 25, xiii. 35)—that the Spirit of God came upon him, took possession of him, and made him pour forth a most glorious revelation regarding Messiah's death and resurrection—that the prophets under similar influence felt greatly oppressed, as Ezekiel says, "And I went in bitterness in the heat of my spirit; and the hand of the Lord was strong upon me" (Ez. iii. 14; compare our remarks on the influence of inspiration in the introduction, pages 10, 11); we can easily understand how the inspired Psalmist under that pressure would exclaim, שָׁמְרֵנִי אֱלֹהִים (Shamreni El), "Guard me, Lord," i.e. support me, sustain me, strengthen me for the holy and glorious task before me of delivering to posterity thy holy oracle; for I have taken my refuge, or shelter, in thee. Thus we see that this expression has nothing to do with the internal subject of the Psalm; nor is it introductory thereto, being merely an expression of the Psalmist's feelings under the influence of inspiration.

There is also a difficulty in the beginning of the second verse, which we must remove before entering upon it. The reader will remember that in the common version this verse begins with a supplement of three words, viz.: "*O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord,*" &c. This supplement was put in by the translators, because they did not understand who the second person was that is thus addressed, "Thou hast said," &c., and therefore they made the soul that second person. But we are satisfied, and we trust the reader will be convinced, that it would have been a better supplement had they inserted, *O my Saviour*, instead of, *O my soul*; for the Saviour, and the Saviour alone, must be the speaker throughout the Psalm. For the latter part of it, we have the authority of the apostles above-named, that David spake of his Son and antitype in the Spirit of prophecy. Now, there is not only no change of person, but on the contrary every evidence that Jesus is the speaker in it from beginning to end; and Jesus as such is introduced at the beginning of the second verse in the words, "Thou hast said unto the Lord," and the immediately following words, "Thou art my Lord," are the commencement of his speech, which continues throughout.

2. Thou hast said unto Jehovah, Thou art my Lord :
My benefits are not bestowed on Thee :†

* To take a familiar instance: What would we think of a man who would say when he came from church some day, "Our minister must be in great distress about some thing or other surely, for in his prayers he said, "O Lord, preserve us?"

† The word טוֹב (Tuv) means not only "bounties, or riches," but includes also the sense

3. They are for the saints on the earth,
And for the devoted ones, in whom is all my delight.*

Jesus loved righteousness and hated wickedness, and pure Divine love and compassion for human souls induced him to undertake the work of redemption—to enter into a covenant with Jehovah His holy and righteous Father—to become flesh, and to shed his blood, and to die on the cross in order to satisfy the Divine law, and be able to stand in the gap at the bar of heaven's justice, and as the Great High Priest and Redeemer to say, "Deliver from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom." This the inspired Psalmist saw when he composed this oracle. As a prophet, and as the father and type of the suffering Lamb of God—the triumphant Shiloh that was promised unto him by an oath—he stands in the Spirit at the foot of Golgotha's Cross—he witnesses the agonizing sufferings and bleeding wounds of his Son—he sees him raised to glory and majesty on his throne as a king for ever, and as a high priest to bestow salvation, and the remission of sins on his faithful children. David therefore addresses the Shiloh in these words, "Thou hast said unto Jehovah," *i.e.* Thou, my blessed Son Jesus, hast said unto Jehovah the Father, who sent thee into this world to accomplish the plan of salvation. Words are then put into the mouth of the blessed Saviour, and He begins to address the Father in the following words, "Thou art my God," *i.e.* to do Thy will I come; this commandment have I received of thee, and I will be obedient unto death, but my "benefits, or my rich bounties, are not bestowed on Thee," *i.e.* all my mercy and goodness which I display in giving my body to be pierced, and in allowing my blood to be shed, are not bestowed on Thee, my holy and righteous Father; Thou hast no profit by my agonies which I endure on the cross—it is not for Thee I suffer, nor for Thy pleasure I die; hence, "my benefits are not bestowed on Thee," but "they are for the saints on the earth, and for the devoted ones in whom is all my delight." It was for those who should embrace Him by faith that Jesus died, for his saints that he willingly shed his blood and gave his body to be pierced—it is on the godly and devoted ones, He bestows salvation and eternal glory, for in them is all his delight. But while the Saviour showed in these two verses that He loves righteousness, and that his delight was, and ever is, to bestow his bounties on the righteous who en-

of those riches or bounties being bestowed upon another. This meaning it has especially when it stands in connection with the owner of the bounties or riches, either in the noun or pronoun. Thus עֲשֵׂי יְהוָה (Tuv Jehovah) stands not only to signify "Jehovah's riches" which He possesses, but His rich bounties which He bestows on those whom He loves (see Ps. xxvii. in this book, lxiv. 13, and Ps. lv., or xxxvii. 11.) The word טוֹבָתִי (Tovathi) in our verse signifies, therefore, the bounties of Messiah which he bestows on others; and what are his bounties but the salvation and eternal happiness which he bestows on the saints? From the plural pronoun הֵמָּה (Hemah) in verse 3, which means "they," *i.e.*, the benefits, we learn that the טוֹבָתִי of verse 2 stands in the plural though the second vau (ו) is dropped.

* The word וְעֲדִירֵי (Veadirey) is taken from אֲדִיר (Adir) which signifies "strong, great, or powerful," and our word means the strong in faith, the devoted servants of the Messiah on whom He delights to confer His bounties, salvation, grace, and happiness.

brace his loving-kindness with gratitude, He proceeds in verse 4 to show that He at the same time hates wickedness.

4. Manifold shall be the afflictions of those
 Who betroth another to themselves :
 I will not pour blood for their libations,
 Nor will I take up their names into my lips.

This verse is exceedingly rich and sublime, though the figures used in it render it a little obscure at first. The Messiah stated in verse 3, that it was for His faithful and devoted children that He prepared all the benefits that issued from His sufferings on the cross ; and in this verse he pronounces the misery of those who, instead of embracing Him as their God and Saviour, and betroth Him to themselves as such by their love, faith, and obedience, would betroth another—would give their love, faith, and obedience to אַחֵר (Achar), “another.” No matter what this other be, whether a god of wood or stone (“Achar” often signifies “a strange god.” See Exod. xxxiv. 14 ; Deut. vi. 14, vii. 4 ; Isa. xlii. 8 ; Jer. i. 16, vii. 18), or pride, or any idol of the affections whatever, or any lust which would lead them to withdraw themselves from the Saviour and serve the devil. The word מַהָרֵּךְ (Maharu) is taken from מוֹהָרֵךְ (Mohar), which denotes the gifts or dowry that the bridegroom in those days used to give to the bride, or even some times to her father, to secure her for himself in marriage. See Gen. xxxiv. 12 ; Exod. xxii. 16, 17 ; 1 Sam. xviii. 25. The child of God is to secure for himself, God's mercy and free grace by continued faith and obedience (see Hos. ii. 19, 20)—by giving himself and all his affections supremely to Christ who died for him, that He might procure salvation and happiness for his soul. The Son of God, the speaker in this Psalm, says in our verse that manifold shall be the afflictions of those who would betroth another to themselves instead of him—who would cast themselves into the arms of any idol of their own making, instead of presenting themselves as living sacrifices to Him who offered the greatest sacrifice for them. The reason of the misery of such rebels the Saviour states in the same verse ; “I will not pour blood for their libations, nor will I take up their names into my lips ;” the meaning of which simply is, I will not shed my blood to make atonement for those who despise it, nor will I make intercession for them—they shall have no part in me and my salvation.

The figure here is taken from the Levitical and sacrificial ordinances, in which the libation or drink offering always accompanied the burnt-offering, and which latter was a most expressive type of the triumphantly risen Saviour. The red wine under the Mosaic dispensation, as under the Christian, was the symbol of the blood of sprinkling that cleanses from all sin. When an Israelite brought his offerings to the altar, he was also to bring wine for a libation, which the officiating priest took from his hand and poured upon the sacrifices on the altar for a sweet smelling savour. (See Num. xv. 1—12). These libations of wine were typical of the Saviour's precious blood which was poured over the sacrifice, His body. The Son of God is that glorious High priest who offered for the faithful their libations (“their,” because they are made partakers of it) of his own blood, which continues to speak for them. But when He announces his abhorrence of the rebels who

reject and despise Him, He says, that He would not pour or offer their drink-offerings מִדָּם (Midam) "from, or, of the blood." The "Midam" is here emphatic "of that blood," the blood of sprinkling—the antitypical blood of the libation of wine. For incorrigible and impenitent rebels the blood of Christ makes no atonement, for how can they be partakers of that which they spitefully reject? No, the Saviour says that manifold shall be the afflictions of those who deny that He is the only door, and that His is the only name under heaven by which men can be saved. O how manifold will be their agonies when they see that the Saviour has rejected them—that they cannot be participant of the blessings procured by His atoning blood—that He will make no intercession for them in the day of judgment—not even mention their names with His lips, but will say in righteous indignation, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" Matth. xxv. 41. This He will do according to His warning, "But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven." Math. x. 33.

5. O Jehovah, my allotted portion, and my cup.
Thou art He who shall maintain my lot.
6. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant spots ;
Yea, mine is a goodly heritage.
7. I will bless Jehovah, who hath given me counsel ;
Even in the night seasons my impulses shall instruct me.*

The Saviour having foretold, in verses 3 and 4, the salvation and prosperity of His devoted children, and the unavoidable doom of those who reject him, proceeds in these verses to express His pleasure and joy in His redeemed and saved ones, whom Jehovah the Father had given him as his possession and inheritance—as the reward of the anguish of his soul : "O Jehovah, my allotted portion and my cup." This figure is taken from the ancient customs of Jewish feasts, when the master of the feast appointed for every one of his guests, his portion of food and his cup of wine, according to his station, and according to the honour he wished to confer upon any one. (See Gen. xliii. 34 ; 1 Sam. i. 4, 5, ix. 23, 24.) It is therefore used metaphorically in Scripture to denote that portion of happiness or misery which God appoints for men according to their desert in this world, as well as in the world to come. The Saviour says here that Jehovah was his allotted portion and His cup, *i.e.* his all in all ; and that He would maintain his lot, *i.e.* give to him what was promised him, which is the souls of men : "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me," &c. John vi. 37, see also verse 39. Again, "No man can come to me except the Father who sent me draw him," &c., verse 44. Again, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me," &c. xvii. 6, &c. Verse 6. "The lines have fallen unto me in

* כֵּלָיִית (Kelayoth), "reins," is used in the Old Testament Scriptures to denote the inward thoughts of man, his desires and affections, also his mind and soul. But the Saviour here evidently refers to those impulses of the Spirit that always accompanied him while on earth, which he calls the night seasons—the period of His humiliation when He walked in the midst of the thick darkness of superstition and infidelity. In those dark days, which were night unto him, a heavenly communication was kept open between Father and Son by the continual impulses of the Spirit. Many of the Saviour's expressions might be illustrated by this fact.

pleasant places." This is another figure taken from the Jewish custom of a father dividing his fields among his sons. The eldest or first-born had two lines (with which they measured), or a double portion, and these two lines he could choose from among the whole of his father's fields. The blessed Saviour, who is the first-born of Jehovah the Father, boasts in his portion (redeemed souls)—He calls it a "double line" (for such honour was conferred on no angel or seraph, see Heb. i.), and "a goodly heritage." But He is not only satisfied with his portion and heritage, which consists in the saved and glorified souls of His children—He is not only well pleased with the reward promised to him for the anguish of his soul on Golgotha's cross; He blesses the heavenly Father for having communicated to him His Divine and everlasting plan of salvation, and for having given him counsel how to carry it out to perfection. "I will bless Jehovah who hath given me counsel," *i.e.* in eternity to undertake the work of salvation—"Even in the night seasons, my impulses shall instruct me." Not only did the Ancient of days furnish His holy Son with counsel in the regions of heaven, but even in the dark season of his adversity, humiliation, and suffering, constant communication was maintained between heaven and earth, between the Father and the Son; in the last agonizing hours, especially when overwhelming calamity and an ignominious death approached, communications, comforting and glorious, were conveyed to His afflicted soul, to strengthen him for the bitter cup He had to drain until all should be accomplished. The Saviour now proceeds to tell the results of those cheering consolations afforded to him:

8. I have set Jehovah before me continually;
That He is at my right hand, that I might not be moved.
9. Therefore is my heart glad, and my glory rejoiceth;
My flesh also shall rest in security:
10. For Thou wilt not leave my soul for hell;
Thou wilt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.
11. Thou wilt show me the path of life,—
The fulness of joy that accompanieth Thy presence;
The everlasting pleasures at Thy right hand.*

* The exclusive reference of the last three verses to the resurrection of Christ, is not only clear and evident from the whole tenor of the Psalm, but is established by Peter and Paul in the Acts of the Apostles. Both of these inspired ambassadors of the cross show that David could not have applied the language to himself, nor indeed could any mortal use it in any way. Peter, after having quoted the three verses literally, says, "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption." See Acts ii, 25—32. The blessed results of this argument, which was accompanied by the Omnipotent influences of the Holy Spirit, are recorded in the same chapter to have been the conversion of three thousand souls, verse 41. Moreover, we are not told that of the whole multitude present on that extraordinary occasion—and among them there must have been hundreds of learned Scribes and Pharisees—even one lifted his voice to oppose Peter, and to say that this passage did not refer to Christ, but to David himself—that Peter falsified the translation of the passage—that it did not refer to resurrection and eternal life at all—that David only said that the Lord would preserve him from death and from the grave—that instead of "Holy One," it must read in the plural "Holy ones"—that it meant merely that the Lord would not

Such was our Saviour's hope and expectation in the terrific prospect of the agonies and death through which He had to pass: "I have set Jehovah before me continually." The word שִׁוִּיתִי (Shivithi) can scarcely find a substitute fit to express its full meaning with due brevity.

allow his faithful servants to die an untimely death—that the "path of life" did not mean eternal life at all, but this present life—and that the last clause of the last verse meant only "a blessed life through thy right hand," i.e. that through the arm or hand of God, David would enjoy blessings in this life. No, not a single Jew was found so ignorant and presumptuous as to maintain that this passage had no reference to immortality and eternity, though they could not perceive its reference to Christ until the Lord opened their eyes.

But had Dr Hengstenberg been there, Peter would have found in him what he found not among the Scribes and Pharisees. To give the reader an idea of what German rationalism is, we tell him in general, that all the objections mentioned above are taken from Dr H.'s exposition of this Psalm. But we shall give a few short quotations confirmative of our statement. On verse 9, "My flesh shall rest secure," Dr H. drops the following remark, "By the flesh, most Messianic interpreters understand the lifeless body, the corpse; to this the Psalmist promises a safe repose in the tomb; so Luther: My flesh also will lie secure. But the following reasons are against this: 1. בָּשָׂר (Bassar), flesh, when used elsewhere in connection with the soul and heart, denotes not the *corpse* but the *living body*. Compare Ps. lxxiii. 1, lxxxiv. 2." What daring presumption is here, to stand against the apostle, who uses the whole passage evidently to show that it altogether and exclusively refers to Christ's resurrection! But mark the futility of the argument, that because David speaks twice of a living body in connection with heart and soul, therefore the flesh here cannot denote the dead body! Why, does he not see that when David speaks of living flesh, the flesh is not represented as lying quiet, but as longing after God, or as praising God? Scores of times flesh appears to denote living body, and more often to denote dead body. The connection which Dr H. finds in this passage between body, and soul, and heart, is a connection formed in his own mind, in order to pervert a most glorious Messianic prophecy; but we see no other connection than that the Saviour is represented as saying, that his heart was glad because of his conviction that his flesh, or his body, should rest secure in the grave until Jehovah should raise it again. Dr H.'s statement that wherever flesh is used in connection with soul and heart, it means that it is animated and not dead, is false, for they have no more connection in this passage than in the following, Job xiv. 20, 21, "Thou prevaiwest for ever against him, and he passeth (i.e., man passeth by death); thou changeest his countenance, and sendest him away. His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them (i.e., because he is dead.)" Verse 22, "But his flesh upon him shall have pain (or decay), and his soul within him shall mourn," or literally, "and his soul shall mourn over him." This passage, and Job xxxiv. 14, 15; Isa. x. 18, &c., show how false his assertion is; and the other arguments that he uses against the same passage fall to the ground, when we remember that there was only one Saviour who was slain, and who rose again; and hence to argue about the peculiarity of a prophecy regarding the Messiah's death and resurrection is impious. But Dr H. is not ashamed to maintain that even Peter understood under the expression, "My flesh shall rest in hope," Christ's preservation, "not in death, but before it."

As we stated above, Dr H. denies that Peter did justice to the 10th verse, for he (Dr H.) renders it, "Thou wilt not leave my soul to hell, nor give up thy *holy ones* (in the plural) to see the *grave*." So that he makes it out to refer neither to Christ, nor even to his death, nor to his resurrection, without seeing corruption. His arguments on this point (which he has adopted from the unbelieving Jews and other daring enemies of the cross) are so abominable and perverted that we cannot write them down without trembling. What will not delusion produce in a man when he is led to maintain that a Psalm which speaks in the singular throughout, should just have one word in the plural, and that word "holy ones," instead of "Holy One," the effect of which is to strip it of its Messianic reference, and thus deprive the inspired apostles of their authority! After having so daringly treated the whole of this glorious oracle, and attempted to show that even the last verse has not the least reference to the future glory, but is entirely confined to this life, he adds an appendix, in which he tries somewhat to modify his previous statements, a quotation from which we shall give, and have done:—"The only apparent ground for this signification (i.e., for Messianic reference in this Psalm), the testimony of the New Testament, must certainly be regarded as quite decisive by any one who views it altogether apart by itself; but those will judge differently who, taking properly into account the whole relation in which the New Testament stands to the Old, have attained to a comprehensive view of the *free manner* in which our Lord and his apostles handle the application of prophecy." Alas, for such Christianity, which treats thus the authority of Christ and his apostles, and holds it so cheap!

It denotes that consciousness with which we could assert that any object is so placed before us, or exactly opposite, or close to us, as that we could touch it, and thus prove the fact of its existence. Jesus was not only confident, but perfectly convinced that Jehovah's presence was with him, before him, and His omnipotence in him. When he opened the eyes of the blind, and raised the dead, silenced the tempest, and arrested the billows of a raging sea, he did so with the authority of a God, and not by humble prayers and supplications first, that the miracle should be wrought, as was the case with the prophets. Though at other times he offered up strong prayers and supplications to his Father, yet in all his miraculous acts, he commanded as a God, and it was done. And how? Under the perfect conviction that Jehovah was in him and with him; "I have set Jehovah before me continually—that He is at my right hand—that I might not be moved," *i.e.* he was sure that Jehovah was at his right hand for the very purpose that in all things he should act as a Person of the Godhead—that he should procure everything by the word of his mouth. There was a terrible hour coming when his soul would be sorrowful even unto death, but even then he would not be left without provision; faith produced by conviction would afford him strength for the agonizing hour when he was to be forsaken of the Father in one sense, but still constantly watched, strengthened, and preserved in another. "Therefore is my heart glad, *i.e.* knowing that thou art at my right hand, "and my glory rejoiceth." The word כְּבוֹדִי (Kevodi) rendered "glory," refers to his inspired and exalted soul which rejoices in praising Jehovah. (Compare exposition of a similar expression in Ps. xxx. chronologically xlviii. 12). Hence the apostles use another symbolical meaning and render it "tongue," but signifying also "soul." The gladness of soul which the Saviour derived from the conviction of Jehovah's presence, fitted him to glorify God by praise, as well as by the wonders done among the multitudes when he spake with his tongue and it was done; and his tongue was made an instrument of glorifying Jehovah always. When he raised the dead, he was perfectly convinced of a speedy and glorious resurrection of his own body that was to be pierced: "My flesh also shall rest לָבַטַח (Lavetach), in security,"—and how? by the hope of resurrection; and hence the apostles use the word in its wider sense, and render it "in hope, or by hope." In the last two verses the resurrection is first described, and then a most magnificent description is given of the return of the slain but triumphantly risen Saviour into the bosom of his Divine Father. Jehovah shows unto His risen Lamb the path of life—leads him to the Mount of Olives, where his enemies laid bold on him on that terrible night—and amidst the shoutings of an innumerable company of the heavenly hosts, He lifts him through clouds and skies into the glorious regions of eternal bliss. Exalted there on the high throne at the right hand of Jehovah Zebaoth, celestial pleasures and the fulness of happiness and joy are his portion for evermore.

PS. CX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXXXVI.

A SONG OF PRAISE BY DAVID.

1. Jehovah said unto my Lord,

2 B 2

Sit thou at my right hand,
Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

This precious and radiant Oracle—this crowned prince of the Messianic Psalms, lifts its glorious head above all the heights of Old Testament revelation, because of its comprehensiveness and perspicuity, and, above all, because of the honour bestowed on it by the great Shiloh, to whom it belongs. "What think ye of Christ?" said He to the multitude around him; "Whose son is he?" And when they answered, "the son of David," Jesus asked them, "How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord," &c. This argument stopped the mouth of his opponents, for "no man was able to answer him a word," &c. Matt. xxii. 42—46. The apostles also make frequent reference to this blessed Oracle, and above all other Psalms it is fitted to put to silence all rationalistic destroyers of Old Testament revelation. The Psalm belongs to the preceding one, inasmuch as in the latter, Christ declared his faith and conviction that Jehovah the Father would not leave him in the grave, nor allow his body to see corruption; and in this, the triumphantly risen Saviour is addressed by the Father, who says, "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The Prince of heaven and of life—the Chief Captain of the celestial hosts—the Crown and Majesty of the Ancient of days—the faithful and well-beloved Son and Lamb of God, had now accomplished his task, and finished the work which had been given him to do. In divine compassion and condescending love, He left the regions of bliss—came down to earth, preached, taught, warned, threatened, and invited—prepared and sanctified a certain number of disciples whom the Lord had given him from the mass of the corrupt and degenerated children of Zion—was at last taken by his enemies, scourged, crucified, and pierced, and on Golgotha's accursed tree could say, "It is finished." The work of the Saviour as a High Priest was finished there, and the blood of sprinkling prepared for Jehovah's sanctuary above. Now it remained for the faithful Father to fulfil His promises to the slain Lamb. This He did first by raising him from the dead, and by taking him up to heaven in glory and triumph; and from this point our Psalm begins, when the inspired David says, "Jehovah said לְאֲדֹנָי (La-Adoni) unto my Lord." The literal address of Jehovah the Father then follows to Jehovah the Son; "Sit thou at my right hand:" thou faithful, obedient, and glorious Son, it is now time for thee to rest—thou hast faithfully fulfilled thy work; and it is now for me to establish thee on the throne as a Prince and a Saviour for ever—it is now for me to give the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession—to make all powers in heaven and on earth subject to thy sceptre, and to make all thy obstinate enemies thy footstool. But every kingdom must have a beginning—a centre—where the sceptre should be put into the hand of the king, and where his reign should be first acknowledged; and where was the Messiah's kingdom to begin, seeing that the ancient Zion, where thrones were once erected to the princes of David's house, was the place where the Prince of Glory was crucified, and her children were now so degenerated and dark, that when the light came they saw it not? Was it in idolatrous Athens, or in heathen Rome, or in dark Egypt, where the Messiah's kingdom should begin and His church be formed on earth? No! for the Oracle says farther:

2. The sceptre of thy strength

Jehovah shall send to thee out of Zion :

Thou shalt rule in the very midst of thine enemies.

Zion, the favoured spot of Jehovah the Most High, where He had once chosen to place his glory in the Shechinah, His Representative—Zion, where the holy temple stood, and wherein the types of a dying and risen Saviour were exhibited for so many centuries, was destined to still greater glory under the spiritual reign of the illustrious descendant of David, who had established her at first—Zion, the cradle of the Church of God, where so many saints, priests, and prophets lived, served their generation, and died—Zion, where so many wonders and miracles had been done in the name of her God—Zion, where the High Priests entered Jehovah's sanctuary once a-year, with the typical blood of sprinkling to reconcile the Holy One of Israel to His children—yea, Zion, where the promised Man was born (see exposition of Ps. lxxxvii., chronologically Ps. lxxxiv.), where the great Antitypical Sacrifice was brought, where the great High Priest lived, and bled, and died, and rose again, and whence he ascended on high in glorious majesty—even that ancient Zion, the city of the living God, was to be the favoured spot where the Messiah's kingdom should begin, his dominion first established, and his throne, as it were, erected, in the first church established there.* This work of wonder the omnipotent Jehovah alone could accomplish, and he said by the mouth of the inspired Psalmist, "The sceptre of thy strength, Jehovah, shall send to thee out of Zion." Jehovah, who was to "maintain the lot of His Son" (see verse 5 of preceding Psalm and exposition), who said to Messiah, "Sit at my right hand until I make all thine enemies thy footstool," and who alone could raise up children unto Abraham, even from the most engrossed and stony-hearted generation—He undertook to establish the kingdom of His beloved Son first in Zion, and said unto him further, "Thou shalt rule in the very midst of thine enemies." Mysterious Omnipotence! How strange Jehovah's ways in His sanctuary! Jesus, the once persecuted, despised, and crucified in the midst of the vociferous shoutings of the multitude, "Crucify him, crucify him, for such an one ought not to live"—was acknowledged, embraced, crowned, adored, and worshipped in the very midst of that nation. The exalted and glorified Messiah was to begin to sway his spiritual and righteous sceptre in the very midst of his deadly enemies. But by what means was this miracle of miracles to be accomplished? Was it to be by war and by the power of a great army? No! Jehovah said, "Not by power, and not by might, but by my Spirit." And His Spirit is omnipotent, and His word like a two-edged sword, like fire and like a hammer that splits the rocks; and the following verse will tell us how it was to be accomplished :

* We need not say much about how the omniscience of God was displayed in the wonderful fact, that in the very land of the covenant—in the very midst of that people who rejected and crucified the Saviour, the first church of Christ on earth was established. What would cavillers and blasphemers have said, had it been otherwise? had the Christian community been formed in any of the heathen countries? Would it not have been considered as a fiction of the idolatrous priests? Israel scattered among the nations, and the Church of Christ having begun in Zion at Jerusalem, are the most wonderful and enduring monuments, and incontestable witnesses of the truth of Christianity.

3. Thy people shall freely offer themselves
 In thy victorious day :
 Like new born babes, in holy ornaments,
 Shall they come early to thee,
 By thy regenerating dew.*

To comprehend fully the rich and important prophecy in this verse, we need no more than resort to the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, where we see the literal fulfilment of it. Our blessed Saviour, after His resurrection, commanded His apostles to wait at Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, which was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them, by which they should receive power to witness for their Master, both in the regions of Palestine and throughout the world. Acts i. 4—8. This was the sole mystery of that power by which alone Jehovah was to send unto His Son the sceptre of his dominion out of Zion. Accordingly, when the Spirit came down in a wonderful way upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, they went forth vigorously, gathered a multitude around them, and with the resistless efficacy of that power within them, they preached Christ and him crucified, and recommended to the overwhelmed thousands of Israel the slain and risen Lamb of God as their Saviour. The Spirit working mightily by them, produced strong conviction in the hardened children of Zion, and priests, and Pharisees, and common people, humbled themselves in the dust, and with deep anxiety put the question to the simple and illiterate Galilean fishermen, whom they formerly despised, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" "Repent," was the reply, "and

* The difficulties met by translators in this verse arise from its highly poetical style, from its sublimity and comprehensiveness, and not from any obscurity in the original. It contains a full description, as well of the instrument by which Jehovah was to raise the first Christian Church in Zion, as of the glorious manner in which they would come and embrace Jesus as their King and Saviour. עֲמֵחָה נְדָבוֹת (Amcha Nedavoth) literally, "Thy people are, or shall be, free-will offerings," i.e. they shall bring themselves as living sacrifices unto thee. The word Nedavoth in itself presupposes that the free-will offering is made to some person. This is supplied by the pronoun "thy" in "Amcha," "thy people." Hence we rendered it, "Thy people shall freely offer themselves," i.e. unto thee whose people they are. בְּיוֹם הַנִּצְחָה (Beyom Cheylecha) "in thy victorious day," or, "in the day of thy triumph," i.e. when thy power shall be displayed. In the second part of the verse, the glorious condition is described in which these children of the kingdom shall come to Christ, and by what power they are drawn unto him. בְּהִדְרֵי קֹדֶשׁ מִרְחָם (Behadrey Kodesh Merechem). These words have a twofold significance, 1st. Behadrey Kodesh means, "in holy ornaments," or "in holy attire," i.e. clothed upon, in the glorious robes of Jesus and his righteousness (compare the following Psalm in this book, verses 8-14), and Merechem, means, "from the womb," or "as from the womb," i.e. like new born babes, innocent, pure, in holy simplicity, sanctified by the influence of the Spirit following. מִשְׁחָר לָךְ (Mishchar Lecha), "Shall come early to thee," i.e. thy people, the new born babes, as above. "Mishchar" is taken from "Shachar," which means, "to seek one early, a longing eagerly after one, to be cast into his bosom (compare Job. vii. 21; Ps. lxi. 1; Prov. vii. 15, viii. 17; Isa. xxvi. 9.) The מ of "Mishchar" denotes the eagerness with which they shall come, as it usually stands for "out of," and the points be put rather מִשְׁחָר לָךְ (Mishlacher Lecha), out of a longing desire shall they come to thee, or longingly run after thee (see Hos. v. 15.) But by what power shall all this be accomplished? The answer follows: בְּלִי יִלְדֻתְךָ (Tal Yalduthecha), "By thy dew of generation," or "By thy regenerating dew;" i.e. by the power of the Spirit who can turn old sinners into new born babes. It is called "thy dew," because this was the promise of the Father to the Son, that he would send the Spirit upon his new offspring, and for which to wait, Jesus commanded his disciples. (See exposition.)

be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." There was immediately formed a church of upwards of three thousand souls (along with the former disciples.) "These continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." By the signs and miracles wrought by the apostles, fear came upon all men in Zion, and the Church of Christ daily increased and prospered; "Praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added daily to the Church such as should be saved."

What a glorious commentary on the first three verses of our Psalm! Jesus had now entered his mysterious rest at the right hand of Power, and the Father began to establish His spiritual monarchy, by sending him the sceptre of his strength out of Zion, and by making him rule in the very midst of his enemies. By what means was all this accomplished? By the regenerating dew—by the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit upon Israel according to Jehovah's promise: "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon," &c. Hos. xiv. 5. Again: "I will pour out my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring," Isa. xlv. 3. And what were the characteristics of that first blessed community into the midst of which, the sceptre of Messiah was sent forth out of Zion? 1st, They offered themselves freely and voluntarily to Jesus, yea, they cast themselves into his arms when they put the anxious question, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" 2d, They came like new born babes, knowing nothing else but Jesus and him crucified. 3d, They came in holy ornaments—in the glorious robes of the Holy Spirit after they were baptized, and had put off the old Adam, and put on Jesus and the garments of His righteousness. 4th, They came early, without delay—they said not, Let us go home and think over the matter; but as soon as conviction reached their souls, they embraced Jesus and believed, and were baptized: and all this by the dew of regeneration. Thus was the first Church formed at Zion, according to the Psalmist's prophecy; and when the Church was strengthened and confirmed, the Lord, in an equally mysterious manner, sent forth that light from thence into the wide world—that new law from Zion, and the word of God from Jerusalem.

But our blessed Lord was not only crowned as a King, He was also made the High Priest of His people.

4. Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent:

Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek.

The priesthood of our Lord is so fully described by the apostle Paul, that no explanation needs be added here. Heb. vii., &c.

We must remember that in the 1st verse the Father promised to assist the Son in subduing all his enemies under him; that verses 2 and 3 contain only a description of the beginning of Messiah's kingdom in the formation of the first Christian Church at Jerusalem; and that the 4th only describes the glorious, and to us most important and cheering office, with which He was invested. But the ingathering of the heathen nations under His sceptre remains yet to be noticed. Now, as David's victorious reign was typical of the spiritual reign of Messiah, no less was the conquest of

Canaan by Joshua at the head of Israel's army, typical of the conquest of the whole world by Jesus, at the head of his heavenly hosts and of his Church below,—all which is conveyed in the succeeding verses :

5. The Lord who is at thy right hand,
Hath destroyed kings in the day of his wrath.
6. With a multitude of armies
Shall He execute judgment among the heathen :
Wounding the head of the wide world.*
7. He shall drink of the stream by the way :
Therefore shall He be exalted as a Prince.

In verse 5 Jehovah the Father must be the person addressed by the prophet, for אֲדֹנָי (Adonai) "The Lord," must here be the same with the "Adoni," "my Lord," of the first verse, unto whom Jehovah said, "Sit thou at my right hand." In this verse, therefore, the prophet says to God, that the "Adoni," i.e., the Saviour who sitteth at thy right hand, hath already destroyed kings in the day of his wrath; and hence the victory is sure on his side. The covenant Angel who was in the pillar of cloud with Israel in the wilderness, and whom the Lord sent before them to destroy the Canaanitish nations with their kings, could be none else but Jesus, for

* In the common version, and by translators and commentators generally, this verse is rendered, "He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill *the places* with the *dead* bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries." Now, besides the absurdity which this rendering forces into such a glorious Psalm, the reader will see by the supplements in the middle clause, that it is not the literal translation of it, for in the Hebrew, there is nothing to answer for "the places," nor for "dead;" for גֵּיְוֹת (Geviyoth) usually means living bodies (see Gen. xlviii. 18; Neh. ix. 37), though it may be used also to designate a dead body, as נֶפֶשׁ (Nepesh) signifies soul, and also the living animated body, and sometimes the dead when life departs. But Gevivyoth here means not only living bodies, but celestial hosts, as it is used in Ezek. i. 11 to denote the body of the Cherubim, or "living Creature," that carried and accompanied the throne of the Most High; and in Dan. x. 6, it is used for the Man clothed in linen, whose גֵּיְוֹת (Geviyah) "body was like the heryl," and whose "face as the appearance of lightning." Now, why has it not been rendered "dead body" in these two places? and by what authority has it been rendered thus in our verse? If they were ignorant of the fact that גֵּי (Gev) means a "collection," hence גֵּי (Gei), "a people," "a nation," "a body politic," "a corpus," and that it is used in its secondary sense only to denote a body, because it consists of many parts and members—then they should at least have left it as it is, and not rendered it dead bodies. The word מְלָא (Maley) often denotes a "multitude," "a great company," as Gen. xlviii. 19, where מְלָא הַגֵּיְוִם (Meloh Hagoyim) means a "multitude of nations," as מְלָא גֵּיְוֹת (Meloh Gevivyoth) in our verse means "a multitude of armies" (see also Is. xxxi. 4 about "Meloh.")

But there is an equal absurdity in the rendering of the last clause: "He shall wound the heads over many countries." Now, besides that it has no meaning at all, it is also false, for the words רֹאשׁ (Rosh) and אֶרֶץ (Eretz) are both in the singular "head" and "earth," or "world." But a Hebrew scholar should know the meaning of this clause from its simplicity: מַחַצַּת רֹאשׁ (Machatz Rosh), "wounding the head," or "prince," as Rosh often signifies; and Machatz is here a participle "wounding"—and whom? the prince; what prince? עַל אֶרֶץ רַבָּה (Al Eretz Rabbah) "of," or "over the wide world;" i.e., the prince of darkness, whose head Jesus was to bruise. Compare Ps. xlvii. 2, where it is said of God, that he is the Great King עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ (Al Kol Haaretz) "over all the earth," in opposition to the prince of darkness, who would have this dominion to himself. See also our translation and exposition of Ps. lxxviii. 22, where it has the same sense as in the verse of this Psalm.

Jehovah said, "My Name is in him." See Exod. xxiii. 20, 21—23, xxxiii. 2; Josh. v 13—15. This blessed Angel of the Covenant is the Adoni of our Psalm, to whom Jehovah promised His omnipotent assistance to subdue his enemies under him. Regarding Him, David says, "The Lord who is at thy right hand hath destroyed kings in the day of his wrath." (See Josh. xii. how thirty-one kings were destroyed by that Angel in Canaan.) As sure as he conquered the kings of Canaan, so "With a multitude of armies, shall he execute judgment among the nations." Wherever the Lord is represented in the scriptures as a warrior fighting against the powers of darkness, he is accompanied by his celestial hosts; and when he appeared in glory and majesty on Sinai, "ten thousands of saints were with him." The executing judgment among the nations means not only the punishing of his enemies, but also the dispensing of justice and righteousness. Compare Isa. ii. 4, ix. 6, 7, xi. 2,—4, &c. But whilst the victorious Prince of glory goes forth to subdue the world under His sceptre, He has also to bruise the head of the prince of darkness, and banish him from his dominions and strongholds. Thus he says, "wounding or bruising the head (or prince) of the wide world;" *i.e.* as he shall pass along to conquer his dominions, the strong one must first be bound before his house can be spoiled. As in verse 3 the power of the Spirit was represented as the sole instrument in the hand of the Saviour of bringing his subjects under him, so in the last verse the Spirit is represented as a stream following the Messiah by the way, wherever he marches with his armies to war against his enemies. In the third verse, the mighty influences of the Spirit are called "dew of regeneration;" but very often they are called "a river," or "a stream," especially by the prophet Isaiah—when he speaks of Messianic times in the name of God; "I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water," (xli. 18, &c.) In eastern countries where there is great scarcity of water, it often occurred that even a victorious general had to stop from pursuing the enemy and completing his victory, in consequence of the want of water for himself and his army. (See Judg. xv. 18—19; 2 Kings iii. 10—20.) Such, says the Psalmist, would not be the case with the mighty Prince of heaven in his spiritual battles; he shall not weary nor faint, for "He shall drink of the stream by the way;" He shall be assisted by the crystal stream of the omnipotent Spirit: "Therefore shall He be exalted as a Prince;" *i.e.*, the nations shall acknowledge him as their Prince, as their God and Saviour.*

* Dr Hengstenberg acknowledges this Psalm to be highly Messianic, and powerfully defends it as such. But while he does so, we must take the liberty of saying that he is grossly inconsistent with himself. To refer to the foot note at the close of the preceding Psalm (the xvi.) in connection with Dr Hengstenberg's exposition of that Psalm, we find that he sets aside the authority of the apostles regarding the meaning of it, (the xvi.), maintains that there is no allusion to immortality and eternity in it, and says that "Christ and his apostles *huddled* in a *free manner* the Old Testament prophecy." Now, in his exposition of the cx. he makes the following statement. "It would imply something altogether derogatory to our Lord, were we to suppose that he could refer a Psalm of merely common import, with so much decision and confidence, to the Messiah, to himself. . . . In like manner it presents the apostles and the authors of the New Testament in a very pitiable light . . . to suppose that a Psalm on which they build so much . . . really contains nothing whatever on which to build such a superstructure." How grievously at variance is this with what he says concerning the xvi. Psalm, on which the apostles build so much! But further, in support of the Messianic import of the cx. he says, that when our Lord made it the basis of his reasonings with the Jews, "His opponents never thought of denying it, (*i.e.* its Mes-

The substance of those glorious Messianic Psalms which we have considered as having been composed by David after the everlasting covenant was made with him regarding the Messiah and his Church on earth, is set forth in Psalm xlv. in a most magnificent song, which consists of two parts, the one designed to exhibit the glory, majesty, and divine splendour of the Messiah under the figure of a bridegroom, and the other to describe the Church's blessed relation to Him under the figure of a lovely and beautiful bride, and the high and holy duties which she owes to him as her husband and head. This celestial Hymn is built on the same basis as Solomon afterwards built his Song of songs. The Church, as the honoured bride of king Messiah, is compared in both to the lily. Solomon compares her to the lily among thorns, Cant. ii. 2, and the blessed Bridegroom is described as feeding among the lilies, (verse 16), finding his delight and pleasure among his children, the members of his bride, the Church. In the title David designates the Psalm, a Song of the Beloved, regarding the lilies, which stands both for the Old Testament Church, including the first Israelitish Christian Church at Jerusalem, and also the Church gathered from the Gentiles, as we shall see internally.

PS. XLV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXXXVII.

To the Chief Cause of all Events.

Maschil: An instructive composition regarding the Lilies.

A SONG OF THE BELOVED FOR THE SONS OF KORAH.

1. My heart overfloweth with a precious Oracle :
I address my composition to the king.
My tongue is like the pen of a swift writer.

The heart of the inspired Psalmist was filled to overflowing (so רָחַשׁ [Rachash] signifies, "to flow over," to bubble over as a strong and rich spring) with a glorious Oracle—with דָּבָר טוֹב (Daver Tov) a precious communication from above, which was to be addressed to the king Messiah. The Psalmist needed no long study about that glorious Oracle, for the Spirit dictated; hence it was no matter of surprise that his tongue was as the pen of a swift writer,—he had only to sing what the Omniscient God the Spirit, put into his mouth.

Having laid the cheering basis of his Hymn, he begins to address the King.

sianic reference) for the purpose of evading the conclusion which he draws." Now, Dr H. denies the reference to the resurrection of Christ in the xvi. although the apostles preached it to thousands of Jews, and not only did none resist it, but three thousand of them were convinced by it, and were converted and baptized. We might quote other statements and arguments, were it necessary, in which he is equally self contradictory and inconsistent; and which are subversive of Divine truth. But we again warn our readers that his work on the Psalms is of most dangerous tendency, just because sacred truth and fatal error and delusion are so ensnaringly intermixed in it, clothed the while in becoming Christian language.

2. Thou art fairer than the sons of men :
Grace was poured into thy lips ;
Therefore hath God made thee an Eternal Blessing.*
3. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou Mighty One,
Even thy glory and thy majesty ;
4. And in this thy majesty, mount quickly thy chariot
In the cause of truth and prostrated righteousness;†
And let thy right hand lead thee to glorious deeds.
5. Thine arrows are sharpened :
Nations shall submit themselves under thee,
When they pierce the heart of the enemies of the King.‡

In passing through this glorious Psalm, we must always bear in mind, that though it is composed in the shape of a nuptial song—though the figures employed in it regarding King Messiah are those of a mighty warrior, of a great and victorious prince in his chariot of war, subduing his enemies by sword and spear; still we are not left for the spiritual applications of them to mere suggestion, for they are embodied in the song, and pervade the whole of it. The very beginning of the Psalmist's address to the king, "Thou art fairer than the sons of men," shows that it is not with a mere man that we have to do, but with a God-man, the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely, into whose lips Jehovah hath poured streams of grace, and hath made him an "Eternal Blessing," or a "Blessing throughout all eternity." "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is

* "Made thee an Eternal Blessing." We understand this to refer to the promise made to Abraham, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed; and thus the Lord said unto him, *וְהָיָה בְרַכָּה* (*Veheyeh Beracha*), "and become thou a blessing," i.e. in thy seed, in whom all the nations shall be blessed. Gen. xii. 2, 3. In our verse it is *בְּרַכָּה אֱלֹהִים* (*Be-rachecha Elohim*), "God hath made thee a blessing," as in Hosea viii. 4, *הִמְלִיכֵהוּ* (*Himlichu*), "They made kings;" *הִשְׁמִירֵהוּ* (*Hesiru*), "they made princes," &c.

+ In the preceding verse the glorious King is called upon, to put on his armour, which is the sword of his glory and majesty (see exposition); and in this verse he is called upon by the Psalmist to mount quickly his chariot. This we understand to be the meaning of the two words *צֶלַח רַכָּב* (*Tzelach Rechav*), "be quick in mounting thy chariot," i.e. thy chariot of salvation. That "*Tzelach*" means often, to come forth suddenly, or to rush quickly upon any thing, see Judges xiv. 6, 19, xv. 14; 1 Sam. xvi. 13; especially 2 Sam. xix. 17, where it is applied to men; *וַיִּצְלְחוּ הַיָּרְדֵּן* (*Vetzolchu Hayarden*), which means, "and they hurried unto Jordan," i.e. to meet the king; so in our verse it signifies to mount quickly the chariot, as *רַכָּב* (*Rechav*) always implies to mount a horse or chariot. In the last clause the words *וְעִנְיַת צְדָקָה* (*Ve'enva Tzedek*) means, "the prostrated righteousness," which was brought low, and to restore which the Saviour undertook. See exposition.

‡ This verse is rendered difficult from the way in which the three clauses are interwoven. *וְהִשְׁמִירֵהוּ* (*Chitzechu*), "thine arrows," *שֶׁנִּינִים* (*Shenunim*), "are sharpened," which implies also, "and prepared to pierce." This stands in close connection with the last clause *בְּלֵב אֱיִבָי* (*Belev Oiyvey Hamelech*), i.e. the arrows are sharpened and prepared, put them "into the heart of the King's enemies." This the nations shall see, and therefore submit themselves under thee, or unto thee, which is the real meaning of *וְיִפְּלוּ תַחְתֶּיךָ* (*Tachtechu Yiplu*), though literally "shall fall under thee," it means, "shall submit themselves unto thee," as it appears twice in 1 Chron. xii. 19, 20, where *נָפְלוּ* (*Nophlu*), literally, "fell," means, they submitted themselves unto David, and joined him and his men, acknowledging him as their chief. Compare Ps. cxlv., chronologically Ps. l. 2, and exposition.

upon me," says the Messiah, "because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek," &c. Isa. lx. 1. Having celebrated the praise and Divine appointment of the Messiah, the Psalmist next calls upon him to enter on His active and glorious office; "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou mighty One." The figure here is taken from a warlike prince who makes himself ready for battle; but the sword which the heavenly Prince girds on his thigh is not made of metal—it is the sword of the Spirit which He girds on when he goes forth to subdue nations under His spiritual sway. This is declared in the last clause of the verse, which explains what the sword means, "Even thy glory and thy majesty." So in many other places, Jehovah is called upon to appear in glory and majesty when He is to come in judgment, or even when He is represented as coming to subdue nations. See Ps. xviii. chronologically Ps. xcii. 9—13; Ps. l. chronologically Ps. lxxxi. 2; Ps. lxviii. chronologically Ps. cxx. 17, 32—35; especially Ps. xciii. chronologically Ps. xlv. 1, "Jehovah reigneth, He arrayed himself in majesty; Jehovah arrayed himself, and hath girded himself with strength." So when the prophet Isaiah speaks of the holy Branch that was to grow out of the stem of Jesse, he says, that "righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins:" xi. 5. This is the sword which the great Prince of heaven is called upon in our Psalm to gird on his thigh. Not that real fighting against, and destroying his enemies by the breath of His mouth is excluded, but that the primary import of the song is to represent the Messiah's spiritual conquests—how he gains the nations by the war of the Spirit to become his bride; but while this blessed process is going on, his enemies—hardened, incorrigible sinners, are pierced by his arrows. Therefore the Psalmist continues in verse 4: "And in this thy majesty," *i.e.* having girded thyself with the two-edged sword of the Spirit, "mount quickly thy chariot," as Habakkuk describes Him "riding on His horses and chariots of salvation." And in what cause was such warlike preparation made? "In the cause of truth and prostrated righteousness." So in the book of Isaiah, when speaking of the same Messianic war, Jehovah says, "And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the street And Jehovah saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore His arm brought salvation unto him, and His righteousness sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head, and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak." lix. 14—17. This sublime passage is the best exposition of our Psalm; and we have also explained the last clause of verse 4, "And let thy right hand lead thee to glorious deeds," *i.e.* in the re-establishment of prostrated truth and righteousness, for which Jehovah had sent forth His right hand, the Son of His bosom, the glorious king of our Psalm. Now, as in the passage quoted from Isaiah, the Messiah is represented as having on the garments of vengeance at the same time that he has on the helmet of salvation, so in the 5th verse of our Psalm, the enemies of the King are pierced by the sharp arrows of his vengeance, while salvation is brought to the nations that submit themselves.

6. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever :

A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

7. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness :
Therefore, O God, hath thy God anointed thee
With the oil of gladness, above thy fellows.
8. All thy garments smell of myrrh and of aloes,
Out of the ivory palaces, wherein they made thee glad.*
9. King's daughters are among thy admirers :
The consort is placed at thy right hand,
Adorned with gold of Ophir.

The blessed King of whom the Psalmist sings, appears at once in verse 6 to be not a common earthly potentate, but a celestial King, yea, God himself: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." But the Psalmist proceeds to show in verse 7, that this was the very reason why Jehovah the Father had established the throne of this God and King for ever and ever, viz., because he loved righteousness and hated wickedness. This verse comprehends the whole plan of salvation by Jesus Christ. When Jehovah in His Divine compassion, condescended in His plan, to restore his fallen daughter (the human family) from her ruined condition, He sought a גֹּאֵל (Goel) a Redeemer (see Ruth iii. 12, 13), to undertake to pay the ransom for her, to satisfy Divine justice, and to take her as his bride. In the Son of His bosom He found One who loved righteousness and hated wickedness like Himself; and the Son having agreed to undertake the restoration of righteousness with his own blood, and to become the bridegroom of the Church, Jehovah the Father anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows. "For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I

* Commentators have found great difficulty in this verse from two reasons: 1st, They have misunderstood the figure in verse 7. And 2d, They have misinterpreted the word קְצִיּוֹת (Ketziot), in this verse, as we shall see. The figure in verse 7 is that of a king choosing a husband for his daughter from among many princes. He finds one whom he prefers before all his fellows, because he finds him a lover of righteousness and a hater of wickedness. Him the king chooses; and as soon as he is announced by him as the future husband of his daughter, he anoints him (according to the custom of the east in those times of anointing the bridegroom which was a sign of gladness and prosperity) with the oil of gladness before all the other princes from among whom he was chosen. The anointed bridegroom is then brought to the wedding chamber, where the bride, adorned with precious ornaments, is placed at his right hand, and where all sorts of amusements are employed to gladden and cheer them (see Cant. iii. 11.) Thus in verse 8, it is said of the bridegroom, that the strong perfume of his garments is felt even outside of the ivory palaces whereto he was brought with his bride, in order thereby to make him glad. מִן הַיָּבֵנִים (Min ha-yabanim), "with myrrh and aloes," קְצִיּוֹת (Ketziot) כָּל-בְּגָדָיו (Kol Bigdothecha) "are all thy garments perfumed," but this always implies that the perfumed garments send forth the fragrance, else it would not be known; hence it follows מִן הַיָּבֵנִים שֶׁן (Min ha-yabanim Shen), "out of the ivory palaces," i.e. the fragrance comes forth out of the ivory palaces מִן הַיָּבֵנִים (Mini Simchucha), "wherein they made thee glad, i.e. from those palaces wherein they (the people appointed to gladden the bridegroom) made him glad. מִן (Mini), is very forcible and comprehensive; it means "from out" and "wherein" at once, as in Psalm xlv. 18, מִן הָאֲרָצִים (Mini Orchecha) "from out thy way," i.e. wherein thou hast commanded us to walk. Now we have to explain that קְצִיּוֹת (Ketziot), is a verb, and means "perfumed," and not a noun, for if it had been a noun it would have been joined to the preceding nouns with a וְ (vav) is joined to כֹּהֵן. But besides this, the Hebrew noun קְצִיָּה (Ketziyah), which means "Cassia," has no plural,

begotten thee. . . . And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. . . . But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Heb. i. 5, 6, 13, 14. Jesus was honoured above angel or seraph to be the bridegroom of Jehovah's Church, and having paid the ransom, Jehovah anointed him with the oil of gladness, &c. In verse 8 Jesus is represented as arrayed in glorious wedding-garments, perfumed with many spices, the odour of which is sent forth out of the ivory palaces where the nuptials take place. (See foot-note on verse 8.) As in verse 7 the bridegroom is represented as having been chosen from among many princes, so in verse 9 the Church, the bride, is represented at the right hand of the bridegroom, though there are many princesses, king's daughters, admirers of the glorious bridegroom. "King's daughters are among thy admirers;" so the word בִּיקְרוֹתֶיךָ (Beykrothecha) means "thy admirers," those who value thee greatly. The word is taken from יָקָר (Yakar), "dear, costly, valuable, precious, splendid," &c. (See 1 Sam xviii. 30, xxvi. 21, &c.) The common rendering, "among thy honourable women," is erroneous, in whatever sense we take it, for the first Church is one, and the first bride must be one, who becomes the queen, and who is addressed in verse 10 as to her duties towards her husband and king. The other virgins, the Gentile churches, come after in verse 14, when they are united to the first Church. But here the first Church is spoken of, which the bridegroom married at Sinai, where he displayed His splendour and majesty; and when all other nations, which are styled the daughters of kings in Scripture language—as daughter of Zion denotes the Israelitish nation; daughter of Tyre, the nation of Tyre; daughter of Babylon, the Babylonish nation—are at first represented as admirers of the bridegroom only, but as having no part in him until the time when his sceptre was to be sent unto him from Zion (see preceding three Psalms), when the Hebrew Church was to merge in the Christian, and seek her companions among the Gentiles; then the virgins, her companions, were to be brought to him. But the whole Psalm is built on the anticipation of that glorious period when all the kingdoms of this world should become the kingdoms of the Lord Messiah, as we shall see in what follows:

10. Listen, O daughter, and consider this, and incline thine ear :
Forget also thine own people, and thy father's house :—
11. Then shall the King set his desire upon thy beauty ;
For He is thy Lord ; do thou therefore worship Him.
12. The daughter of Tyre shall come with a present :
The richest among the nations shall entreat thy favour.

but is used as a verb, to denote "to perfume," "to spread over with spices," or even to overlay something with the bark or peel which is taken from the Cassia plant, and thus perfume it." The plural therefore in our verse is used for the garments which have been perfumed with myrrh and aloes, and which sent forth the odour from the ivory palaces wherein bride and bridegroom were placed in order to the nuptials (see more in exposition.)

13. All the glories of the king's daughter must be within ;
Which are more precious than her gold-embroidered robe.*
14. Virgins, in rich attire, shall she lead to the king :
After her, her companions shall be brought to thee.
15. They shall be conducted with joy and exultation :
Thou shalt bring them into the kingly palace.
16. Instead of thy fathers shall be thy sons,
Whom thou shalt make princes in all the earth.
17. I will make thy name to be remembered for all generations :
Therefore shall nations praise thee, world without end.

The sacred poet having described in the first part of the Psalm the glory and majesty, the offices and triumphs, the love and mercy of the Divine Bridegroom, the King Messiah, turns in the 10th verse to address the bride—the Church. "Listen, O daughter," *i.e.* to the following advice and exhortation of an inspired friend, "and consider this," *i.e.* consider the condescending love of the Prince of Glory, who resolved to redeem, and save, and espouse thee, not for his benefit, but for thine own—"Consider this, and incline thine ear" to the following exhortation. "Forget also thine own people and thy father's house:" put no confidence in thy descent, for none of thy forefathers could save thy soul—depend not on thy relationship to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for they needed the same Saviour to redeem their own souls—divide not thy affections between Jesus and thy relations, for none of the latter bled for thee, nor are they able to make thee glorious, and advance thee to celestial honour. Cast thyself entirely into the arms and bosom of thy beloved Saviour, who has bought thy love with a dear price: "Then shall the King set his desire, or delight, upon thy beauty (for thou art only beautiful when belonging entirely to him); for He is thy Lord—do thou therefore worship him" (compare 1 Sam. xxv. 41), *i.e.* honour Him as he deserves—reverence Him as thy Lord and Saviour—give thyself as a whole burnt-offering to Him—know nothing besides, and pay him the homage due to His name. In verse 12 the reward of the bride's obedience is described in that the daughter of Tyre shall come with a gift to her. Tyre is here taken as a figure, because it was then the wealthiest nation in the world, and it means that the richest nations shall make presents to the Church of Christ while she remains in her holy obedience to her Head. This is immediately explained by the second clause: "The richest among the nations shall entreat thy favour," *i.e.* that thou mayest give them instruction how to

* Some commentators understand this verse to mean that the king's daughter is glorious within, *i.e.* in her chamber; and the Germans especially force this absurdity in order to deprive the verse of its spiritual splendour. They thus make it denote that she is glorious or beautiful in her interior chamber; but if we allow this perversion, then the ridiculous absurdity will appear at once, for it must imply, that she loses her beauty, when she comes forth to the street. But the connection of both members in the verse is maintained by the כִּי־שֶׁבֶט (*Mimishbetzoth*), which evidently is a כִּי comparative, and denotes "more than," *i.e.* more than her gold-embroidered robe. Now, according to their interpretation, the "mem's" existence must either be denied, or they must understand it to be a preposition denoting "out of," in which case the absurdity is apparent, *viz.*, that the whole robe was made of embroidery. Surely a robe is only embroidered with, and not made of, embroidery.

come to the Shepherd of souls, and that thou mayest introduce them to Him by prayers and supplication, but more especially it means to join thee and share in thy blessed privileges. In verse 13 the Psalmist tells us, that though he uses figures in the song, they were not to be misunderstood, for that they have all a spiritual beauty—that as the beauty, glory, and majesty of the Bridegroom are spiritual—as He is King for ever on His heavenly throne, so the beauties of the bride His Church are spiritual,—that though he said in verse 9, that the consort of Messiah is placed at His right hand in gold of Ophir, this is to be taken spiritually, and that “all the glories of the king’s daughter must be within, and are more precious than her gold-embroidered robe,” *i.e.*, that it was spiritual graces and ornaments with which she must be adorned when placed at the right hand of the King of Glory—that all the outward splendour of the world will not make her worthy of His love, whose is the world and the fulness thereof—that without holiness she will not see him even were she to be covered with gold altogether. In verse 14 the influence of the Church of God over the heathen nations is described, לְרַקְמוֹת תוֹבֵל לְמִלֶּךְ בְּתוּלוֹת (Lirkamoth Tuval Lamelech Bethuloth) “Virgins in rich attire shall she lead to the king.” The ancient Church was intended to exist until the Messiah should come, when she was to make known his name among the nations. The first Christian Church at Jerusalem was the real Church of God descended from the Church of the Old Covenant, the rest of whose children reviled, and crucified their Saviour; and she emphatically represented the old Church and Consort of the great King. From the midst of her apostles, and New Testament prophets, and evangelists, she went forth and led virgins to the Messiah. These were introduced and soon formed the Church, while the former was dissolved and lost in the latter. Hence the second part of the verse says, “After her,” *i.e.* when she is dissolved, “her companions shall be brought unto thee.” These companions are brought to Christ with joy and exultation (verse 15.) As Christ’s throne is in heaven, therefore the Psalmist says (verse 16) that Messiah’s sons shall be princes in this world instead of his fathers, David, Solomon, &c. See Rev. i. 6. In the last verse we hear the voice and resolution of the Church according to the instructions she received in the foregoing verses.

DAVID’S WARS, AND VICTORIES, AND PSALMS OF THANKSGIVING.

With the rapid growth and prosperity of David and Israel, the enmity and jealousy of the neighbouring heathen nations increased, and soon broke out into a violent flame. Indeed all the information concerning David’s wars which we can gather from the books of Samuel and Chronicles is but an insignificant outline. Nevertheless, we learn that he was involved in tremendous wars, and was often surrounded by many mighty and warlike nations, who exceeded his army both in strength and number. But whilst with the former there was only an arm of flesh, Jehovah, the omnipotent God of David’s promises, fought for Israel; and although the times and changes were critical, and the wars often hazardous, and attended with great loss, still the Israelites were victorious. The nations were discomfited before them, and the deliverances thus vouchsafed filled the royal Psalmist’s heart with gratitude, and under the Holy Spirit’s influence he

composed glorious songs of praise in testimony thereof. According to 2 Sam. viii. and 1 Chron. xviii., his first battle, after several years of peace, and after having received the glorious promises, was with the Philistines. This inveterate enemy waited only until they had recovered from the double stroke which David inflicted on them after he was made king over all Israel (see 2 Sam. v. 17—25), and now, therefore, they rose again. But at this time David carried the war into their own territory, took Gath their capital, and its suburbs, and made them his vassals. Soon after this event, the Moabites made war against Israel, but they were also completely subdued and rendered tributary to their conquerors. But then David was involved in a more dangerous war with Hadarezer, king of Zobah, who had all Syria and Mesopotamia at his command, and a vast multitude of chariots and horsemen besides, of which Israel possessed none. From the contents of the lx. Psalm, which was composed after the termination of this war, we may learn that it had cost the nation much blood, and that the conflict must have been terrible, though it ended in victory at last; the united armies of the Syrians having been totally routed, and their riches carried off by David, which he consecrated for the building of the temple under his successor. The wearied army had not long reposed from the fatigue of the Syrian campaign, when Esau came forth with his sword and his bow. A strong detachment of the Israelitish army was sent by Joab under the command of Abishai his brother, who met the Edomites in the valley of Salt—which formed the boundary between Judea and Edom—and 12,000 Edomites fell. David then followed with the main body, and having entered the territories of Esau, he destroyed other thousands of them, and reduced the nation to entire subjection under him.

When all these conflicts and disasters had finally ended in victory, and David and Israel had become the terror of the heathen round about Palestine, the king composed the lx. Psalm as a national song of praise, and caused the sons and daughters of Israel to commit it to memory. It is styled **לְלַמֵּד מִכְתָּם לֵלְמֵד** (Michtam Lelamed), “a composition to be learned and committed to memory.” (See explanation of Michtam in the preface to Ps. lix. chronologically Ps. xi.) It is also styled **שִׁשְׁשָׁן עֵדוּת** (Shushan Eyduth), “the testimony of the lily,” *i.e.* the testimony or acknowledgment of the Church (which is called “the Lily”—see Cant. ii. 2 : compare preface to the preceding Psalm) to her gracious God for the deliverances and mercies.

PS. LX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXXXVIII.

To the Chief Cause of all Events.

A PSALM TO BE LEARNED AND COMMITTED TO MEMORY.

Composed by David regarding the Testimony of the Lily (*i.e.* the acknowledgment of the Church); when he defeated the Syrians of Mesopotamia and the Syrians of Zobah, and when Joab returned and destroyed twelve thousand Edomites in the valley of Salt.

1. O God, Thou hast repulsed us and broken us :

2 c

- Thou wast angry ; O restore us again.
2. Thou hast convulsed the land and bruised it :
O heal the breaches thereof : for it shaketh.
 3. Thou hast made Thy people experience hardships :
Thou hast given us to drink intoxicating wine.
 4. Thou hast given a banner to those who fear Thee,
Whereto they should repair for security, Selah, always.

The language used by David in these three verses plainly shows that Israel must have suffered severely in these wars ; nor need we be astonished at this when we consider, that it was a struggle with the mightiest nations of the east, Philistia, Moab, Syria, and Edom. "O God, Thou hast repulsed us and broken us." This we must understand,—Thou hast allowed us to be repulsed and crushed by our enemies ; and this must have happened more than once, for it is repeated in verse 3 under the figure of an intoxicated man who cannot remain firm in one place ; and so, in like manner, an overwhelmed army. But in verse 4 David says, "Thou hast given נֶסֶם (Ness) a banner to those that fear thee." Under this banner we understand Jehovah's promises in general, and the promises lately made to David in particular. This banner the Lord had given them in order that they should repair to it מִפְּנֵי קֹשֶׁט (Mipney Koshet) "for security," or even "because of its security," *i.e.* that they should repair to it, because the refuge under it was so certain. The figure is taken from the banner lifted by the commander-in-chief for the direction of the army, but we think that here it has reference also to Num. xxi. 8. As surely as the one lifted by Moses cured every man that looked on it, so surely shall every one be secure who puts his trust in Jehovah's promises. That קֹשֶׁט (Koshet) denotes "certainty," or "validity," is evident from the parallel passage in Prov. xxii. 21, "That I might make thee know קֹשֶׁט (Koshet), the *certainty* of the words of truth." Here we see that "Koshet" does not denote "truth," for אֱמֶת (Emeth), which denotes truth, follows after. For the meaning that we have given to מִפְּנֵי (Mipney), "for," "because," see Exod. xix. 18 ; Jer. xlv. 23. The next following verse belongs to the first part of the Psalm, though it was interrupted by the Selah.

5. In order that Thy beloved may be strengthened,
Save us with Thy right hand, and hear us.

This means, that in order that Jehovah's children might be strengthened in their faith in the promises which the Lord had given them—in the banner of verse 4, He should send them deliverance, and hear them always. The Psalmist proceeds now to describe the import of Jehovah's promises made to him, and in him to all that fear Jehovah, which is the certain overthrow of their enemies—the sure and secure banner of verse 4.

6. God hath promised by His holiness, that I shall triumph :
That Shechem shall become my portion—
That the valley of Succoth shall be measured by me.

7. Behold, Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine :
Ephraim also is my principal fortress ;
Judah is my commander.
8. Moab shall be my wash-pot ;
Over Edom will I cast my shoe :
Philistia blew alarm because of me.
9. Who else could bring me into the fortified city ?
Who else would have led me into Edom ?
10. Hadst Thou, O God, pushed us away—
Hadst Thou, O God, not marched along with our hosts ?
11. Grant Thou help unto us against the adversary :
For vain is the assistance of man.
12. Through God we shall act valiantly :
He alone shall tread down our adversaries.

In verse 4, David boasted in the sure banner of Jehovah's promises to him, and in him Israel at large ; and in verse 6 he begins to explain it, showing how wonderfully these promises had been fulfilled in his being promoted to the throne in spite of all opposition offered by Saul, and afterwards by the eleven tribes. **אֱלֹהִים דִּבֶּר בְּקֹדֶשׁוֹ** (Elohim Diber Bekodsho), "God hath promised by his holiness," *i.e.*, by an oath unto David through the prophet Samuel (compare parallel passages Ps. lxxxix. 35, cxxxii. 11 ; 2 Sam. iii. 9), "that I will triumph," *i.e.*, obtain the kingdom over Israel, and prosper in all my ways. Though the promise made by an oath to him by Samuel, and renewed by the prophet Nathan, referred also to the everlasting covenant entered into with him about the Messiah and his kingdom (see Acts ii. 30), yet he here refers to that part of the promise which had received its fulfilment already, and was still to be fulfilled in his lifetime. Jehovah had promised him that he would triumph over his enemies, Saul, &c.—that Shechem, an ancient town in the mountainous districts of Ephraim, should become his portion, should belong to his dominion as a king—and that the valley of Succoth, a town near Jordan in the valley belonging to the tribe of Gad, should be measured by him ; signifying that it would be subject to him and at his disposal. These two places are mentioned chiefly because they lay in the extremities of the land of Israel, and import that besides Judah, the Lord had promised him the entire dominion over all Israel. David now proceeds to show how faithfully Jehovah had fulfilled this promise, "Behold, Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine ; Ephraim (the most influential tribe) is my principal fortress," *i.e.*, the greatest supply to his army was from that tribe ; "Judah is my commander," *i.e.*, Joab and Abishai, and many other officers in his army belonged to the tribe of Judah. Seeing, then, that Jehovah had fulfilled this part so wonderfully, David concludes that his heathen enemies must be crushed under him : "Moab shall be my wash-pot," an expression of contempt ; while he says, "Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine," *i.e.*, my beloved subjects. He says that Moab was now his also, but it was like a dishonourable vessel, used only for the common purpose of washing one's feet in ; for Moab was reduced by David to the lowest state of servitude. "Over Edom will I cast my shoe." The mountains of Edom not being easily accessible, this is an expressive figure for ascending those mountains, and then traversing the land

and subduing it (see Obad. 3, 4); and the meaning here is, "I will tread on, or traverse, the mountains of Edom." "Philistia blew an alarm because of me." So the phrase must signify as it stands here; but we think that the right reading is that of Psalm cviii., which is a transcript of our Psalm, and is as follows: עָלַי פִּלִּשְׁתִּי אֶתְרוּעָה (Aley Phelesheth Ethroa) "Over Philistia will I triumph." But those nations had already been subdued. Moab and Philistia had been made servants, and the mountains of Edom had been ascended, and his castles and fortifications conquered. David therefore says, "Who else could bring me into the fortified city? Who else would have led me into Edom? Hadst thou, O God, pushed us away, or repulsed us." This last expression stands in reference to verse 1, where David says, "O God, thou hast repulsed us;" but seeing that Jehovah's "banner" was so secure as that when they looked to it in faith the Lord delivered them and made them victorious; therefore he draws the conclusion that Jehovah had repulsed them altogether—that when He allowed them to experience danger and hardship, it was that they might direct their eyes to the banner. This the Psalmist understands, and says, Hadst thou repulsed us altogether—hadst Thou not marched along with our hosts, surely we could never have ascended the mountains of Edom, nor destroyed his fortified city. He concludes by casting himself for help in time of distress into the arms of the holy, Omnipotent, and faithful Jehovah.

While this Psalm, according to its title, was intended as a national song of triumph after a disastrous time of war and of fear, the cviii. seems to have been composed at the same period for celebrating the triumph in the tabernacle. Indeed we can scarcely call it a new composition, for it consists of the last five verses of Ps. lvii. chronologically Ps. xxxi. slightly altered, and the last eight verses of this one. We can easily understand why they were thus coupled together. Psalm lvii. was written in the cave of Engedi when David's life was in imminent danger; but his firm hope in God, especially as expressed in the last five verses, was now richly rewarded, and the fulfilment of Jehovah's promises to him is described in the latter part of Psalm lx. Hence nothing could be more appropriate than to join them together in one song of praise. The reader will find exposition of the first five verses of the following Psalm at page 169, where the original Psalm is given.

PS. CVIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. LXXXIX.

A VOCAL SONG OF PRAISE BY DAVID.

1. My heart is well supported, O God :
I will sing, yea I will sing praise ;
And so shall my glory.
2. Awake, psaltery and harp :
I will rise along with the morning star.
3. I will praise Thee among the peoples, O Jehovah !
I will sing of Thee among mighty nations.
4. For great to the heavens is Thy tender mercy ;
And Thy faithfulness to the skies.

5. O God, lift up Thyself in the heavens above—
And throughout all the earth in Thy glory.

There is a slight variation in verses 1 and 2 here, from the original Psalm. In the latter the verse which constitutes the second here begins, "Awake, O thou my glory," while in this Psalm the Psalmist's glory is represented as already awakened and ready for praise. This is owing to the fact that the original was composed in a time of great distress, when his "glory," which means his triumphant soul, needed refreshment and awakening, as it could not triumph in the cave of Engedi when danger was so nigh. But when the present Psalm was composed, David's "glory" was already awakened by the favours which the Lord had bestowed on him, and the victories which He had granted him over his enemies. (See farther with regard to the expression "My glory" in Ps. xxx. chronologically Ps. xlviii. 12, and Ps. xvi. chronologically Ps. lxxxv. 9, and expositions.) The other part of this Psalm consists of the last eight verses of the preceding one with slight alterations.

6. In order that Thy beloved may be strengthened,
Save us with Thy right hand, and hear us.
7. God hath promised by His holiness, that I shall triumph :
That Shechem shall become my portion—
That the valley of Succoth shall be measured by me.
8. Behold, Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine :
Ephraim also is my principal fortress :
Judah is my commander.
9. Moab shall be my wash-pot :
Over Edom will I cast my shoe :
Over Philistia will I triumph.
10. Who else could bring me into the fortified city ?
Who else would have led me into Edom ?
11. Hadst Thou, O God, pushed us away—
Hadst Thou, O God, not marched along with our hosts ?
12. Grant Thou help unto us against the adversary :
For vain is the assistance of man.
13. Through God we shall act valiantly :
He alone shall tread down our adversaries.

DAVID'S WAR WITH THE AMMONITES AND THEIR ALLIES.

Notwithstanding all the victories which David had gained over Philistia, Moab, Zobah, and Edom, Israel's peace was not of long duration, for they were soon unavoidably and unexpectedly involved in a most dangerous war with the Ammonites. On the death of Nahash king of the Ammonites, with whom David had been on friendly terms, he sent messengers to Hanun, the son and successor of the deceased king, to condole with him on his father's death, and also to congratulate him on his accession to the throne; for "David said, I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me." (2 Sam. x. 2.) But

instead of acknowledging David's kindness, the wicked and ungrateful Hanun treated the Israelitish ambassadors with unheard-of indignity and the vilest infamy. Having shaved off one-half of their beards, and cut off their garments to the girdle, he drove them back in that disgraceful condition. Tidings of this insult and indignity having reached David, he in the first instance sent out men to meet his messengers, and as they could not appear in public, he ordered them to remain at Jericho until their beards grew. While David did this, he must at the same time have been preparing to demand satisfaction from the inhuman Ammonite king; and the Ammonites rightly conjecturing his purpose, sent a thousand talents of silver to hire the armies, chariots, and horsemen of Mesopotamia, Syria, Maacha, and Zobah. The auxiliaries having brought with them thirty-two thousand chariots into the Ammonite territory, and pitched their camp near Medeba, and all the children of Ammon having gathered themselves to the same spot, they divided their forces, and put the Ammonite army opposite the gate of the city, and the Syrians by themselves in the field. When Joab came to meet them with the forces of Israel, he was not only afraid by reason of the great numbers of the enemy, but he saw that their position was such as would enable them to surround him and his army on every side. He therefore instantly divided his forces also, and put one part under his brother Abishai, who was to fight against the Ammonites, while with the other he himself met the united Syrians. That Joab dreaded the combined power of all these kings we may learn from his address to the army before the engagement: "Be of good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly, for our people and for the cities of our God; and let the Lord do that which is good in his sight," (2 Sam. x. 12.) However, when the armies encountered, the Syrians fled before Joab, as did the Ammonites before Abishai, and after the engagement Joab returned to Jerusalem. But this had not been enough to humble the Ammonites, and instead of taking measures now to reconcile David for the injury they had done, they made greater preparations for war than before. Backed by all the forces of Hadarezer, with all the princes and armies of Syria and Mesopotamia, and by those Syrians on the other side of Euphrates, with an overwhelming number of chariots, they made ready to march against Israel. David did not wait until his country was invaded; but gathering the whole army together, he crossed the Jordan, and falling upon the Syrians, he routed them with great slaughter, destroying forty thousand footmen and seven thousand chariots, and killing Shobach besides, their greatest captain. In consequence of this glorious victory, the Syrian princes, the vassals of Hadarezer, entered into a treaty of peace with David, and became his servants, and left the treacherous Ammonites to their deserved doom. Meantime king David returned to Jerusalem, fully satisfied that there now remained no nation in the east which would or could disturb Israel any more.

To that period several Psalms evidently belong, the first of which must be the xlv., another the xlviii., and a third the xviii. Internal evidence will prove that to no other period of Israel's existence in Palestine can the former two belong; and Ps. xviii. needs no confirmation.

PS. XLVI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XC.

To the Chief Cause of all Events.

A VOCAL SONG OF PRAISE FOR THE SONS OF KORAH REGARDING THE MYSTERIES.*

PART FIRST.

1. God is unto us a Shelter, yea a mighty one—
A very ready Help in time of distress.
2. Therefore shall we not fear the changes of the earth ;
Should even the mountains shake in the bosom of the sea.
3. Let them roar : let its waters foam :
Let the mountains tremble at its swelling, Selah, continually.

This magnificent and highly poetical language of unshaken faith was misunderstood by some commentators, who therefore wished to make it refer to an earthquake. But this is a very injudicious conclusion, 1st, For what hath the raging of the sea to do with an earthquake? 2d, Let them turn to Psalm lx. and hear David saying in verse 2, "Thou hast convulsed the land," or earth, "and bruised it: O heal the breaches thereof: for it shaketh." Now surely if the one would indicate an earthquake, so would the other. But in that Psalm David explains that shaking of the land to mean the convulsions caused by war: "Thou hast made thy people experience hardships," &c. So we learn not only that these figurative expressions refer to the shaking which the nations received by the tremendous wars which surrounded them, but we also see that both Psalms refer to one and the same subject; though we are decided that whilst Ps. lx. was written at the time indicated in its title, this one was composed after the war with the Ammonites and Syrians, as we shall see as we pass along. In the first part, which forms its ground-work, the Psalmist triumphantly exclaims that, God being Israel's Shelter and Help in time of distress, they may rest secure even amidst the rage of all elements combined, which is a figure for the combined forces of the heathen nations, as in Ps. ii. he said, "Why do the heathen rage?" Compare Ps. xciii., chronologically Ps. xlv. 3, 4. He then goes on to describe more particularly the reason of Israel's fearlessness and confidence.

PART SECOND.

4. The stream of His beneficent dispensations
Shall gladden the city of God—
The holy abode of the Most High.

* אל-עלמיה (Al Alamoth) "regarding the mysteries," or "hidden wonders," no doubt referring to the wonderful victories and deliverances which Jehovah had granted his people in a mysterious manner, in the overthrow of the armies of so many and mighty nations. The word אלם (Alam) signifies "mystery," "inexplicable secret," &c. (See Job xi. 6, xxviii. 11, 21; Ps. xlv. 21, xc., 8, &c.)

5. God is in the midst of her : she shall not be moved :
God shall help her, at the dawn of the morning.
6. The heathen raged : the kingdoms were agitated :
He uttered His sounding voice : the earth melted.
7. Jehovah Zebaoth is with us ;
The God of Jacob is our high fortress, Selah, always.

What a mighty ground for Israel's fearlessness in time of distress ! What an immoveable foundation on which the sons and daughters of Zion are called to build their hope and confidence ! In the first part of the Psalm, the rage of the heathen nations was represented under the figure of a tremendously raging sea, in the midst of which mountains (which means mighty nations), shake and tremble, but Israel scorns the storm, and stands fearless and confident in Jehovah his God. The reason is expanded in the second part, stating first, in verse 4, נָהָר פִּלְגֵי (Nahar Pelagov), "The stream of His beneficent dispensation," *i.e.* the rich blessings and abundant gifts of God. פָּלַג (Palag) means "to divide" into parts, or into branches, also to give something in divisions in many parts. The possessive pronoun in פִּלְגֵי (Pelagov) cannot refer to the נָהָר (Nahar), and mean, "the divisions of the stream or river," for in this case it would be פִּלְגֵי נָהָר (Palgey Nahar), "the divisions of the stream." But it decidedly refers to God, who in the first verse was said to be Israel's Shelter. "The stream of His beneficent dispensations shall gladden the city of God," while the whole heathen world, which has no part in them, may well shake and tremble at every swelling of war. In the 5th verse, he says, that because God is in the midst of her, *i.e.* because His Shechinah dwells in Jerusalem, therefore shall she not be moved, for He will help her at the dawn of the morning, which means, before the heathen can do her any harm, Jehovah sends His salvation to her and silences her adversaries. The proof follows from the recent experience, that when the confederate heathen raged against her—when all kingdoms were agitated, Jehovah uttered His voice, and the earth melted, *i.e.* the mighty armies were discomfited and destroyed. This verse is quite sufficient in itself to decide that the Psalm refers to David's wars with the confederate heathen nations, and when we compare this with Ps. xviii., we see that they refer to one and the same subject.

PART THIRD.

8. Come, behold the works of Jehovah,
Who hath made desolations in the earth !
9. He maketh wars to cease to the ends of the earth :
He brake the bow, and cut the spear asunder ;
The chariots He hath burned with fire.
10. Be still, and know that I am God :
I will be exalted among the heathen :
I will be exalted in the earth.

11. Jehovah Zebaoth is with us,
The God of Jacob is our high fortress, Selah, always.

It would be spending words to no purpose to add proofs to verses 8 and 9 that this Psalm was written by David at the period we have assigned to it. It was after his victories over the confederate heathen nations that Moab's city lay desolate, and also the cities of the Zobaïtes and other Syrians, and Edom, and Philistia. These nations were taught to wage war no more—their bows were broken—their spears were cut asunder, and many thousands of their chariots were destroyed and burned with fire; and thus war ceased to the uttermost extremities of the earth, which means the uttermost boundaries of Palestine and of those nations round about it. In verse 10 Jehovah the God of Zion is represented as speaking; and the Psalm is closed with the triumphant exclamation of verse 7.

We now come to the xlviii. Psalm, the next written by David on the same occasion, and on careful consideration the reader will see that it forms the second half of the whole song of triumph. The expressions and sentiments are alike in both, though the former enters more into the particulars of the wars. This Psalm is divided into two parts by one Selah.

PS. XLVIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XCI.

A VOCAL SONG OF PRAISE FOR THE SONS OF KORAH.

PART FIRST.

1. Great is Jehovah, and exceedingly to be adored
In the city of our God, on His holy mountain.
2. The beautiful elevation,—the joy of the whole earth—
Mount Zion, on the northern borders,
The city of the great King.*
3. God is known in her palaces as a high fortress.
4. For, behold! the kings assembled; they passed along together.
5. They saw it, and were confounded: they were terrified and hasted away.
6. Dread seized on them there: trembling, as on a travailing woman:
7. As if by an east wind which wrecks the ships of Tarshish.
8. As we have heard, so have we seen,
Concerning the city of Jehovah Zebaoth,
Concerning the city of our God:
God will establish her for ever, Selah, for ever.

* נֶפֶחַ (Noph), means "to lift up," "to elevate" (see Lev. vii. 30, viii. 27, 29, &c.; Isaiah xi. 15 xiii. 2, &c.), and יֶפֶת נֶפֶחַ (Yepheth Noph), in this verse means that Mount Zion was a beautiful elevation. "The joy of the whole earth" is primarily to be understood "land," but spiritually surely it is "the joy of the whole earth," wherever there are children of God, and it will one day be literally so. "On the northern borders," i.e. of Judah's territory. Zion, the beloved mountain of God, lay to the outermost boundary of Judea, and formed the northern wall of Judah's territory, though the northern side of it belonged to Benjamin (see for further explanation pp. 70 and 147, and compare Ps. lxxviii. 68.)

Some commentators wish to establish from verses 5 and 6, that an enemy must be intended who came near Jerusalem; but we have no such account throughout the Bible as of an enemy having come near it, and fled because of terror when he saw the beauty of Zion, as these verses would indicate according to their view. Others from verse 7 suppose, that it must refer to a particular time when ships of Tarshish were wrecked by a storm; but all this arises from ignorance of the beautiful figures here employed. In the preceding Psalm we have seen how David speaks of the victory granted to him over all the combined heathen nations, and he closes it in these words, "Jehovah Zebaoth is with us," *i.e.*, His presence, the Shechinah between the Cherubim is dwelling in the midst of us; "the God of Jacob is our high fortress, Selah, always." In this Psalm he describes the glory of Zion, and says in the 3d verse that "God is known in her palaces as a High fortress," *i.e.*, that the inhabitants of Zion have experienced it, and have seen that Jehovah who dwells in Zion is the mighty Protector of his people. This he illustrates by the fact that "the kings assemble," *i.e.*, the kings of Ammon, of Syria, of Zobah, &c., and "passed along together," *i.e.*, marched forward for war; "They saw it," *i.e.*, that God is our High fortress, for we were but few comparatively; and they "were confounded; they were terrified and hasted away. Dread seized on them. . . . As if by an east wind which wrecks the ships of Tarshish," *i.e.*, so were they seized with pangs, and so was their army driven and wrecked. In the 8th verse David says, "As we have heard," *i.e.*, in the promises of God, "so have we seen," by experience, that they are true. Hence he concludes that God will establish Zion for ever.

9. O God, we waited patiently for Thy loving kindness
In the midst of Thy temple.
10. According to Thy name, O God, so is Thy praise;
Even to the ends of the earth; for Thy right hand is full of
deliverance.
11. Let Mount Zion rejoice:
Let the daughters of Judah exult, because of Thy judgments.
12. Walk about Zion, and go round about her;
Number the towers thereof:
13. Mark well her bulwarks, admire her palaces;
That ye may tell it to the generation following.
14. For this God is our God for ever and ever:
He will guide us mysteriously.

The 9th and 10th verses contain a further illustration of verse 8, viz. that they have experienced Jehovah to be the same as His word of revelation and promise represented him. For the meaning of the word דָּמִינוּ (Diminu) in verse 9, which we have rendered "we waited patiently," see exposition of the first verse of Ps. lxxv., in this book Ps. lx. Israel is represented as waiting patiently for Jehovah's loving kindness in his temple at the altar; and in verse 10 they experience His goodness and mercy just as they were told of him. On the word צֶדֶק (Tzedek) rendered here "deliverance," see critical note, page 314. The last word of our Psalm reads עַל-מוֹת (Al-Muth) and has been translated, "unto death;" but

the Jews that made the points failed to understand it: it should be pointed thus עלמות (Alamoth) as it is in the title of the preceding Psalm. David opens that Psalm by saying that it treats of "the mysteries," *i.e.* the mysterious deliverances which Jehovah grants to his people, (see foot-note on that title); and here he ends the subject by saying that God will always lead them "mysteriously" in ways which they knew not of. That the preceding Psalm is only the half of the subject, and is completed by this one, is evident from the fact, that the former ends with a *Selah*, which always indicates that something more belongs to it. That a Psalm was inserted between these two is owing to the manner in which all the Psalms have been intermixed. (See General Introduction, page 24.)

INTRODUCTION TO PS. XVIII.

This triumphant song of exultation was composed by David, as its title shows, on the day when the Lord had delivered him from all his heathen enemies, and from the hand of Saul. This superscription of the Psalm is repeated and confirmed in 2 Samuel xxii. 1. But although it appears in that book after his flight from Absalom, we do not think that it is put there according to chronological order, for the strong language used by David in it—the pleas for his devotion, integrity, and holiness, could by no means have been uttered after his fall into sin. Nay, those Psalms which were composed by him after his fall are characterised by a melancholy echo proceeding from a broken-hearted, humbled, self-abased saint. Moreover, the arrangement in the second book of Samuel is easily accounted for when we consider, that it is immediately followed by David's last words (xxiii. 1—7), which shows that they were put there only to show how he expressed his deep gratitude to the God of his promises. It is also evident that throughout the Psalm David speaks of victories gained by *himself* over *heathen* enemies, and in wars in which *he* had been *present*. We remark lastly, that after a minute investigation into the variations of the texts, as given in the book of Samuel, from that in the Psalms, it has been made clear and evident to us (and so it must be to every Hebrew scholar), that the text in Samuel must be the original, and that David had made some very happy and sublime emendations before he gave it to the temple musicians. The glorious magnificence and majestic splendour of the poem, its sublime figures, its comprehensiveness in depth and height, and its seraphic flights into the mysterious regions above—it is impossible for human language adequately to describe.

PS. XVIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XCII.

"Lannatzeach," To the Chief Cause of all Events.

A PSALM OF DAVID THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH;

Who addressed the words of this song to Jehovah, in the day when Jehovah had delivered him from the hands of all his enemies, as He did from the hand of Saul.

And he said,

1. I love Thee heartily, O Jehovah my strength !

2. Jehovah is my Rock, and my Stronghold, and my Deliverer.
My God is my Rock, in whom I take shelter—
My Shield, and the Horn of my salvation—my High fortress.
3. With adoring praise will I call on Jehovah,
And be saved from mine enemies.

Blessed experience taught David to love Jehovah with his whole heart—experience taught him that Jehovah was to him all that is enumerated in verse 2. To enter on an explanation of the extraordinary figures used in this Psalm, and which figures are all combined with David's history, our limits will not allow, for it deserves a treatise by itself. In verse 3d David states that his condition was so brilliant now, that his victories placed him in such a position, that when he does call on Jehovah it is with the voice of adoring praise, and not as it was in those days of which he speaks in the succeeding part. The apparent future tense in which many verbs occur in this Psalm has occasioned many commentators and translators to despoil the poem of its beauty, but these are aoristical, or indefinite verbs, and refer to things past, and are only placed so because the Psalmist speaks of many troubles he had been in, not simply of one. We must therefore understand them thus, "When I was wont to call, to cry," &c.; as may be seen from the deliverances spoken of being in the past.

4. The cords of death encompassed me,
And the floods of Belial filled me with terror.
5. The bands of hell surrounded me—
The snares of death overtook me.
6. In distress I called, "Jehovah," and cried aloud to my God :
From His temple He heard my voice ;
And my loud cry came before Him—into His ears.
7. Then did the earth shake and quake:
The foundations of the mountains did also tremble—
They did shake, because He was wroth.
8. A smoke went up from His nostrils,
And a devouring fire from His mouth—
Flakes of fire proceeded from Him.
9. He also bowed the heavens, and came down :
And there was darkness under His feet.
10. He rode upon a cherub and did fly ;
And He soared on the wings of the wind.
11. He made darkness His covert round about Him—
His pavilion, volumes of waters—thick clouds of the skies.
12. At the brightness before Him the thick clouds dissolved
Into hailstone and flakes of fire.

Hitherto continues the extraordinary, and no less awful than sublime description of the preparations of the High and Terrible One to fight against the enemies of His saint—of His anointed servant, when his bitter complaints and loud cries reached His throne. Any definition of the highly poetical figures employed by David to represent the movements of the Almighty for the destruction of his enemies would require a height of

thought which the human mind cannot reach. One thing we know, that it was angels who destroyed Sodom with brimstone and fire from heaven, and still Jehovah himself (Gen. xix. 13, 24)—that it was Jehovah's angel that destroyed the first-born in Egypt, and still Jehovah himself (Ex. xi. 4, xii. 12, 23)—that it was the angel of God who went before Israel in the pillar of cloud and fire, and who destroyed the Egyptians in the Red Sea, and it was Jehovah himself (Ex. xiii. 21, xiv. 19, 24)—that the captain of Jehovah's armies came to fight for Joshua against the Canaanites—and that it was Jehovah who cast large stones upon the confederated kings. (Compare Josh. v. 13—15, x. 11.) Now let us compare the horses and chariots of fire which came to protect Elisha (2 Kings vi. 17) with the oracular answer given to David when the Philistines came against him: "And let it be when thou hearest the sound of a going, (or of the rustling of steps) on the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the Lord go out before thee to smite the host of the Philistines." (2 Sam. v. 24.) Such celestial hosts must have fought for David against the confederate armies of the Ammonites and Syrians, and against their hundreds and thousands of chariots and horsemen; and hence we need not be surprised at the figures employed by him in this Psalm. He next proceeds to describe the glorious consequences of heaven's preparations against his enemies.

13. And Jehovah thundered in the heavens,
And the Most High sent forth His voice—
Even hailstone and flakes of fire.
14. He also sent forth His arrows, and scattered them,—
Showers of lightnings, and confounded them.
15. Then the channels of the waters appeared;
Then the foundations of the world were discovered,
At thy rebuke, O Jehovah—
At the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.
16. He sent from on high to fetch me:
He drew me up out of mighty waters.
17. He delivered me from my formidable enemy,
And from my foes, when they were too powerful for me.
18. He came to meet me in the day of my calamity: *
And Jehovah was a support unto me.
19. And He brought me forth into a place of liberty;
He delivered me, because He delighted in me.

Thus far we have the first part of David's description of Jehovah's assistance afforded to him against his enemies; and as a general remark we observe, that although David here describes generally Jehovah's war

* The figure here is taken from the ancient custom (which, indeed, continues among the Hebrews to this day) of friends visiting each other in times of calamity, as did Job's friends—(see exposition of Ps. xxx., chronologically Ps. xxx. 13, 14.) So David says here, "He came to meet me in the day of my calamity," *i.e.*, to comfort and to deliver me. The whole scope of the preceding and following context shows that this must refer to God, and not, as translators and commentators refer it, to David's enemies, a reference which deprives the verse of its beauties. If the *v* in the word יְקַדְּמֵנִי (Yekadmuni) stands in their way, let them compare the text with the original in Samuel, and see that there is none.

against his adversaries from the beginning of his persecutions under Saul to his last Ammonite-Syrian war, still the deliverance spoken of in verses 16—19 refers to that from Saul, which was effected without David's putting his hand to the sword. The other deliverances from the heathen against whom he personally fought begin to be described from verse 32. It is therefore important for the reader to find out that the innocence of which David speaks from the 20th to the 31st verse refers to the false and wicked accusations brought against him by Saul and his associates. Of these he could entirely acquit himself; and this he pleads in the sight of a just God, and of course it has as its foundation the fear of God, and love to His commandments. The reader is requested to examine carefully the statements advanced from verse 20 to 31, and see that they refer to his former life until he was placed on the throne.

20. Jehovah rewarded me according to my righteousness,
According to the purity of my hands He recompensed me.
21. For I have kept Jehovah's ways,
And have not wickedly departed from my God.
22. For all His judgments were before me ;
And His ordinances have I not put away from me.
23. And I was perfect before Him, and kept myself from my sin.
24. And Jehovah rewarded me according to my righteousness,
According to the cleanness of my hands before His eyes.

In proof that all these expressions refer to David's innocence in the matter of Saul, though, as already remarked, he founds this on his fear of God and love of his commandments, the reader may compare some Psalms composed by him under Saul's persecution, especially the lix., chronologically xi. 3, 4, and the xvii. chronologically xxxiii. (see exposition of the latter.) The last-mentioned Psalm refers to the same event as the 23d verse of our Psalm, which the reader will find illustrated by comparing all this with 1 Sam. xxiv. 5—8, 12, 16, 18. In the succeeding five verses David addresses God in the second person.

25. To the merciful Thou provest Thyself merciful :
To the upright Thou provest Thyself upright.
26. To the pure Thou provest Thyself pure :
But with the perverse Thou wilt wrestle.
27. For Thou didst save the afflicted people,
But the haughty eyes Thou hast brought down.
28. For Thou, O Jehovah, hast lighted my lamp :
My God brought light in my darkness.
29. By Thee alone have I broken through an host ;
And by my God have I leaped over a wall.
30. He is a God whose way is perfect :
Jehovah's promise is purified :
He is a shield to all who take shelter in Him.
31. For who is God, save Jehovah ?
And who is the Rock except our God ?

So far David's description of his struggles under Saul extends, and of the deliverance and exaltation he obtained from his faithful God because of his integrity and uprightness. In verses 25—28 the references to Saul and to himself in that relation are particularly marked. For illustration of verse 25, "To the merciful Thou provest Thyself merciful," compare again 1 Sam. xxiv. 11, 16, especially xxvi. 24, "And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the Lord, and let Him deliver me out of all distresses." In verse 27 he says, "For Thou didst save the afflicted people," &c., which may refer chiefly to David and his men, and generally to the whole nation of Israel, who were saved from the tyranny they were subjected to by Saul. How beautiful and expressive is verse 28, "For thou, O Jehovah, hast lighted my lamp; my God brought light in my darkness." Often were David's mind and prospects as dark as the dark caves whither he fled for refuge, but the Father of light commanded the darkness to disperse, and lighted for him a radiant light, both in the present time in advancing him to the throne, and in the more glorious light of the promises which He made to him. For the expression in verse 30, last clause, "Jehovah's promise is purified," compare Psalm xii., chronologically Ps. xxiii. 6, and exposition.

32. It is God who girded me with strength,
And He made perfect my way.
33. He maketh my feet like those of the hinds,
And maketh me to stand on my high places.
34. He traineth my hand for war,
That my arms could stretch a brazen bow.
35. Thou also hast given me the shield of Thy salvation :
And Thy right hand supported me,
And Thy condescension maketh me great.
36. Thou hast widened the space for my steps under me,
So that my ancles never slipped.
37. I pursued mine enemies and overtook them :
I turned not back till they were destroyed.
38. I crushed them, so that they could not rise again :
They fell down under my feet.
39. But me Thou hast girded with strength for battle ;
Thou hast subdued my adversaries under me.
40. Thou madest mine enemies turn the neck before me,
That I might destroy those that hate me.
41. They cried, but there was none to save them ;
To Jehovah, but He answered them not.
42. I grinded them as dust before the wind :
I trampled them down like the mire of the streets.
43. Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people ;
Thou hast made me the head of heathen nations :
A people whom I know not serve me.
44. At the hearing of the ear they obey me ;
The sons of strangers have submitted to me.

45. The sons of the strangers fade away,
And tremble even in their strongholds.
46. Jehovah liveth ! O blessed be my Rock :
And exalted be the God of my salvation ;
47. Even the God, who exercised vengeance for me,
And hath subdued nations under me ;
48. Delivering me from mine enemies.
O Thou hast exalted me above those that rose against me.
From the man of violence Thou hast delivered me.
49. Therefore will I praise Thee, O Jehovah, among the nations ;
I will sing praises unto Thy name.
50. He hath magnified the salvations of His king,
And bestoweth mercy on His anointed,
Even on David, and on his seed for evermore.

To such a height Jehovah was pleased to exalt the once obscure shepherd boy of Jesse's flocks. How mysterious the process through which that adoring saint was brought ! How numerous and how wonderful the deliverances granted to him ! How glorious a catalogue has he left for generations to come in this matchless song of triumph and praise ! Jehovah had exalted David not only to the highest temporal glory of kings, but also to the highest spiritual glory with the covenant promises. Hence he concludes by showing how Jehovah had magnified the salvation of his anointed king, not only in and unto David himself, but unto his promised seed the Messiah for evermore.

DAVID'S FALL AND REPENTANCE.

We now approach that melancholy and darkest period of David's life, when, instead of a glorious and exalted saint, he remained for a time a spiritual ruin within his royal palace, as was once his father Adam in Paradise. It was not like the danger to which his life was exposed under Saul when he hid himself in the caves of the earth, but it was the danger of falling into the hands of the High and Terrible One, from whom there is no hiding place. It was not the prison of Philistia in which he once was miserable, but from which Jehovah had wonderfully delivered him, but it was the dark and dreary prison of a guilty conscience in which his soul was tortured. It was not the dread of an army of combined foes marching against him, when he could repair to the holy Oracle to ask Divine aid and direction, but it was the dread of the judgment of the Holy One of Israel, who cannot look upon sin but with abhorrence, and whom he had grievously provoked. He who in his youth slew a bear, and tore a ravenous lion without a weapon in his hand, and rescued the prey from their jaws, fell into the snare of that roaring lion, who goes about seeking whom he may devour. Hurried away by the lust of his eyes, he forgot who he was—the soul became darkened by the clouds of human weakness and carnal desire—the flesh prevailed, and having opened the sluice of passion, it gushed forth into a violent stream, which swept away all reflection and self-command before it, stripped him of his glorious robes of justice and

honour, and well-nigh drowned his soul. One crime having been secretly committed, the fruits of which threatened publicity, scandal, and reproach, arts were resorted to, if by any possibility the sepulchre might be whitened, and the guilt covered. But all such means having failed, distress, shame, fear, and agony, originated the fatal resolution of attempting to conceal one crime, by perpetrating another of a still more aggravated character. But whilst all these things were hid in darkness and secrecy from men, the all-surveying eye of the Omnipotent God saw it: "The thing that David had done displeased the Lord." (2 Sam. xi. 27.)

This unhappy and lamentable event in David's life occurred when Joab and the whole army were carrying on the siege of Rabbah, the capital of the Ammonites, on account of the great injury done to the messengers he had sent to Hanun, on the occasion of his father's death, as before related. But although the Ammonites were now left without auxiliaries, still their fortifications were so formidable that the siege continued for several years, during which period David both committed sin with Bathsheba, dispatched her husband Uriah by the sword of the Ammonites, and took Bathsheba into his house when she bore the child.

When we remember who David was—when we consider his former piety and devotedness to God, especially as they appear in those inspired and glorious oracles which he composed before that mournful event—when we reflect that the Divine instructions left for us in these oracles are irresistible proofs that he was a most eminent pattern for saints in his spiritual experience—it is almost impossible for us to adopt the common opinion that he remained hardened and unconcerned about his guilt during all the time that elapsed from the commission of the first sin until Nathan came to him. How could he but have fearful forebodings of the displeasure of God and its terrible consequences? Though he did much to hide his guilt from the public, might it not be because he thought of the great injury and reproach that it would bring on the cause of religion? We cannot for a moment suppose that the author of the Psalms could be buried in such a blindness and indifference for a whole year. The very rashness and suddenness in which he committed the one crime, and the agony and misery which impelled him to commit the other, in order that the first might not be exposed to the world, must have brought along with them overwhelming grief and distress when he thought that all was now done with respect to men; but how do I stand with God? At the sametime, however, one thing is evident, that the delusion of sin had so fatal an influence upon him, that he regarded the matter between him and his God as but secondary, and that the first step he took was to prevent the publicity of his crime.

In this unhappy and bewildered state of mind David was not left long, nor did Jehovah abandon him as He did Saul; but in mercy and divine compassion, as well as in holiness and rectitude, He met him by his servant the prophet, as He had met the patriarch Jacob of old at the brook Jabbok, and Moses on his way to Egypt, and he brought him to repent, and to abhor himself in dust and in ashes. "And Jehovah sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him: There were two men in one city; the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and

drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller (or guest) unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd to dress for the way-faring man that came unto him; but took the poor man's lamb and dressed it for the man that was come to him." David, in his ignorance and false security, not knowing that a dagger was prepared in these inspired words for his own guilty breast, and, being naturally humane and generous, was filled with indignation at the thought that such cruelty should be perpetrated within his dominions, and passed instant sentence, saying, "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." Having thus pronounced his own judgment, and justified God in the message that had been delivered to him by the prophet, the latter said unto him, "THOU ART THE MAN. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel. . . . Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife. . . . Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house. . . . Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun." The Divine arrow was aimed at David's heart and soul—it failed not—it pierced deep—it wounded that breast which had so often been filled with inexpressible joy produced by Jehovah's mercies, deliverances, and glorious promises. Thunderstruck and convicted, the prostrate saint exclaimed, "I HAVE SINNED AGAINST THE LORD." His wounds were not allowed to bleed long—the operation was successful and complete, and the compassionate physician of heavenly Gilead had sent balm to pour into his bruised soul, as he did to Adam before expelling him from Paradise. "And Nathan said unto David, THE LORD ALSO HATH PUT AWAY THY SIN: THOU SHALT NOT DIE." (2 Sam. xii. 1—14.) The prophet having told David that the child that Bathsheba had born unto him must die, left the humbled, crushed, and broken-hearted king to himself, and departed from the Palace.

It is unnecessary to make any additional remarks with respect to David's spiritual history after the frightful and yet consoling message from heaven which he had received, as this will be abundantly seen in the penitential Psalms on which we now enter, and the first of which is that heart-rending confession and supplication, the li.

PS. LI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XCIII.

(Lamnatzeach) "To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A PSALM OF DAVID,

Composed when Nathan the prophet came unto him after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

1. Be gracious unto me, O God, according to Thy tender-mercy :
According to the multitude of Thy compassions,
Blot out my transgressions.

2. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.
3. For I do acknowledge my transgressions :
And my sin is before me continually.

What a lamentable change has taken place in the language of Israel's inspired Psalmist! Where are now those bold and cheering pleas, "Direct me, O Jehovah, for I have walked in mine integrity. . . . And I have walked according to thy faithfulness. . . . I will wash mine hands in innocency, and then will I compass thine altar, O Jehovah" (Ps. xxvi., chronologically lxiii. 1, 3, 6)? Or where is now that triumphant saint who said, "Jehovah rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the purity of my hands He recompensed me; for I have kept Jehovah's ways," &c. (Ps. xviii., or the preceding in this book, verses 20, 21)? Fallen, rebuked, and threatened, humbled and broken-hearted, the once upright and triumphant saint now stands crushed under a heavy burden of the most abominable of sins, and makes a public confession of the crimes into which he had so suddenly fallen. Although the prophet conveyed heaven's pardon for his sin, he only told him that the Lord had put it away so that he should not die for it as he deserved according to the law, yet he had by no means recalled the sentence pronounced in the name of God, that a devouring sword should never depart from his house; and the terrible punishment denounced began soon after to be inflicted. Stripped of all his former pleas of integrity and devotion to God's law, he who re-established tabernacle and sacrifices, now stands stained with such sins as no sacrifice was ordered for, or could be accepted under the law, and he can lay hold on nothing but Jehovah's free grace and pardoning love. "Be gracious unto me, O God, according to Thy tender mercy. . . . Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." And on what grounds are these petitions presented? Is it, as he said in the above quoted passage, "that he had walked in his integrity?" No, his integrity was then clean gone—he stood as a poor self-condemned suppliant for mercy, and the foundation he builds on in his petition is, first, Jehovah's mercy, and next, his own broken-hearted confession; "For I do acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is before me continually." These two things together form the highway along which the sinner must direct his flight from destruction to safety, in both Old and New Testament Revelation (baptism of repentance); and in both it must be presupposed that there is a Mediator through whom the holy and righteous God can be merciful. As this glorious door for sinners by a Saviour was no mystery to David, he therefore, as a penitent sinner, entreats pardon of the merciful Jehovah.

4. Against Thee, Thee separately have I sinned,
And done this evil in thy sight;
On account of which Thou wilt be justified in Thy sentence—
Thou wilt be clear when Thou judgest.

Here stands the man whom God had lifted up from the dust—whom he had anointed king over His people—whom He had delivered so wonderfully from Saul and from all his enemies—whose throne He had exalted

to the highest splendour of power and majesty—to whom He had given eternal promises—and with whom He had entered into an everlasting covenant. As a broken-hearted offender against that God, David takes into account the aggravation of his sins, arising from the greatness of the mercies bestowed on him formerly, and acknowledges that, severe as was the sentence which had been pronounced by Nathan against him in the name of the offended God, it was only what he very justly merited. “Against Thee, Thee separately, have I sinned,” *i.e.* my sin was not only against man, but against infinite goodness, against an unspeakably merciful God, who bestowed upon me innumerable blessings unknown to any man heretofore. “Against Thee,” my benevolent and gracious God; “against Thee separately”—apart from all the wrong I have done to my fellow-men, with which Thou, as God, must be offended—apart from all the abominableness of my transgression as a man against my fellow-men, woe unto me, for I have sinned “against Thee separately,” and specially because of the peculiar relation which Thou wast pleased to establish between me and Thyself, and because of my wickedness and presumption in endeavouring to bury my sin, and to conceal it if possible from Thine all-surveying eye.* David therefore confesses that his sin, in this aspect of it, justified all the severity of the fearful sentence pronounced against him by the prophet Nathan: “Against Thee, Thee separately have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight,” *i.e.* in Thy Omnipresence, though I thought my sin was hid, though my fall was so terrible that I forgot that Thou sawest it, still I have done it in thy sight; and “on account of which, or for the which,” *i.e.* for the awfully aggravated nature of my guilt, “Thou wilt be justified in Thy sentence,” *i.e.* as it was pronounced by Nathan—Thou wilt be clear when Thou judgest,” *i.e.* even when Thou wilt bring all the threatening into execution.†

* We see that commentators have felt great difficulties in explaining this expression, but the cru-e lies with themselves, for it is not in the text. They have rendered it, “against Thee only.” &c. No matter of surprise that they found difficulty in explaining the meaning of “only,” for surely David’s sin was against men also, yea, against man it began first to be manifested. The numerous explanations they give are forced, strange, and unmeaning. Now the primary signification of לְבַד (Levad) is not, “only,” but, “separate.” Many passages might be cited where to translate the word Levad by “only,” would be ridiculous. One passage where the word occurs three times, will suffice as an illustration. In Gen. xliiii. 32, when Joseph’s brethren were to dine with him, and the Egyptian princes, we are told; “And they (the servants) set on for him (Joseph) לְבַד (Levado) by himself,” or more literally “separate.” and for them (his brethren) לְבָדָם (Levadom), separate; and for the Egyptians which did eat with him, לְבָדָם (Levadom) separate, &c. Why translators were led rather to difficulties, than to give the word its right meaning in our verse, we cannot tell (see for the same word, “Levad,” rendered in the common version, “by themselves,” but which means “separate,” Gen. xxi. 28–29. Some times it means “besides,” “except,” &c., as in 1 Kings xii 13; Esth. iv. 11, &c.)

† The particle לְמַעַן (Lemaan) rendered in the common version, and followed by many commentators, “that thou mightest,” cannot have this meaning here, and indeed has this meaning very seldom, though it is always wrong translated in one way or another. It means very often, “on account of which,” or “for the which,” as Gen. xxvii. 25, “On account of which my soul may bless thee.” It appears twice in Nehem. vi. 13, “On account of which,” (*i.e.* because he was hired to prophecy falsehood), he is a hireling, or, he was hired, that I may fear, and do so (*i.e.* follow his lies), and sin, and that they might have matter for an evil report, on account of which they might reproach me.” Here it must twice have the sense we have given it, and the reader will observe that in the common version the “Lemaan” in that verse is rendered “therefore,” which will bring out the same meaning which we attach to it. The same meaning it must have in Jer. xlv. 8, “on account of which ye shall be cut

5. Behold, I was brought forth with iniquity ;
Yea, with sin did my mother conceive me.
6. Behold, Thou requirest truth even in the inward parts :
O do Thou also teach me wisdom in secret.
7. Sprinkle me with hyssop, that I may be clean ;*
Wash me until I be whiter than snow.
8. O communicate to me joy and gladness,
That the bones which Thou hast broken may exult.
9. Hide Thy face from my sins—blot out all mine iniquities.
10. Create unto me a clean heart, O God,
And renew within me a firmly-established spirit.
11. Cast me not away from Thy presence ;
And take not away from me Thy Holy Spirit.
12. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation,
And let the beneficent Spirit support me.
13. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways,
And sinners shall be converted unto Thee.

Having in the 4th verse justified the sentence and judgment of God against him, the penitent Psalmist begins again to supplicate for pardon, and complains in verse 5 of the original sin which is born 'with man, and which cleaves to him as soon as he becomes flesh. "Behold I was brought forth *with iniquity*;" it came with me into the world—as a child of fallen Adam as soon as I first saw the light—all wicked propensities and desires of the flesh came with the flesh into existence, though they were only gradually developed: "Yea, with sin did my mother conceive me;" I am a child of corrupt and sinful nature. Verse 6. "Behold, Thou requirest truth even in the inward parts:" *i.e.*, seeing Thou requirest me to be perfectly pure and holy even as Thou art holy—to overcome all corrupt inclinations, and passions, and propensities, and affections, and to give myself wholly and entirely into Thy hand, and devote myself to Thy service. This I cannot accomplish by my own power, seeing I am brought forth in sin; I pray Thee, therefore, "O do Thou also teach me wisdom in secret," *i.e.*, grant me the power to fight against flesh and blood—against the law in my members, that I may be enabled to yield myself a whole and liv-

off—on account of which ye shall become a curse." The reader may see how unnatural the common rendering there is, "that ye might cut yourselves off," &c. In the numerous places where it appears before a noun significant of a name or attribute of God, it has the same meaning, as לְפָנֵי שְׁמִי (Lemaan Shemo), "for the sake, or on account of, His name;" Jehovah will do it on account of His name by which He revealed himself as a righteous God. So לְפָנֵי חַסְדּוֹ (Lemaan Chasdo), "for the sake, or, on account of, his mercy." Compare 1 Kings xi. 12, 13, 32, 36, 39, especially the last verse, "And I will afflict the seed of David for this," &c. The same meaning it has in our verse, that "for this," or "on account of this," viz., David's sin, God would be justified in His sentence, however severe.

* This figure is taken from the Levitical law of the leper, who was sprinkled with hyssop dipped in the blood of the killed bird (Lev. xiv. 6, 7), when he underwent the course of purification. But it has also an allusion to Num. xix., to the ordinance of the Red-heifer, of the ashes of which was made the water of separation, or purification, with which the person that had contracted defilement was sprinkled on the third and seventh days, and thus made clean. See Num. xix. 12, 18. (Compare our publication on the Old Testament types, on the law of the leper, and on the ordinance of the Red-heifer.)

ing sacrifice upon the altar of Thy revealed will and law. From verse 11, we think it evident that the Spirit was not removed from David all the time, and indeed he needed it to become such a penitent—to undergo such a process of refinement—to make such extraordinary confessions—and to leave such healing balm for fellow-sinners as he has treasured up in his penitential Psalms. This is his own statement in verse 13 after he had prayed for pardon, and for perfect spiritual restoration; for he says, “Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee:” hitherto have I taught the righteous how to make progress in sanctity and devotion, and instructed thy devoted children how to behave in time of trial—how to submit in distress—how to rejoice in salvation—how to adore in triumph and joy; but now I have been broken, cast to the dust, humbled, crushed, and heavy laden with sin; and if Thou restore me, I can by experience invite sinners—show that Thou art gracious, long-suffering, and merciful—that Thou hast no pleasure in their death, but in their restoration,—thus teaching them by my own example, and communicating to them my own experience. O blessed Psalmist! thou wast led in mysterious ways; and if thy former experience gave comfort and consolation to saints, thy latter experience was also sanctified, and made the instrument in the hand of the Spirit of producing invaluable treasures of instruction and counsel, of light and peace, of encouragement and prayer, of faith and assurance, to poor wandering sinners, and of recovering many a feeble soul from agony and despair.

14. Deliver me from the guilt of blood,
O God, the God of my salvation :
And my tongue shall praise aloud Thy deliverance.
15. O Lord, open Thou my lips,
And my mouth shall declare Thy praises.
16. For Thou dost not require sacrifice, or I would give it :
A burnt-offering wilt thou not accept.
17. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit :—
A broken and a contrite heart God will not despise.

David's present position was not such as to admit of bringing sacrifices according to the law, for the law made no such provision for sin wilfully committed. When he prays, therefore, in verse 14, that the Lord would cleanse him from the guilt of blood, he immediately follows this petition with another in the 15th verse, that the Lord would enable him to bring the calves of his lips—give much prayer and supplication, praise and thanksgiving. He then gives the reason, showing that in this his state the broken heart and the contrite spirit were the only sacrifice acceptable; and such he brought in abundance. He sincerely humbled himself in dust and ashes before Jehovah, whom he had offended—he wrestled with Him in supplication, and shed rivers of tears before the throne of grace. Accordingly, Jehovah, the compassionate God, not only pardoned him (though He punished him, and purified him in a furnace of misery); but even after his departure from this earthly scene of change, He held him forth as a pattern to saints, and again and again made mention of his piety and devotion (see 1 Kings xi. 12, 13, 33, 38; xv. 4, 5, &c.)

18. Do good in thy good pleasure to Zion :
Build thou up the walls of Jerusalem.
19. Then shalt Thou accept the sacrifices of righteousness,
With burnt-offerings, and all that accompanieth them :
Then shall bullocks be brought upon thine altar.

David's affection for Zion and for Israel is well known; for when, because of his numbering the people, the pestilence broke out among them, and the angel with his drawn sword came to destroy Jerusalem, David said unto the Lord, "Behold, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but those, sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me and against my father's house." (2 Sam. xxiv. 17.) He had now fearfully sinned in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah, and the sentence was pronounced against him that "the sword should never depart from his house" (see 2 Sam. xii. 10); and terrified lest Israel should suffer through his sin, he closes the Psalm with a prayer for them under the figure of Zion (the Church); "Do good in Thy good pleasure to Zion: Build Thou up the walls of Jerusalem." This last expression means emphatically to grant and continue His protection to His people—to extend unto them His mercy and grace—to be a wall of fire around them—to build them up in righteousness. Compare Ps. lxxxix. 2, "Mercy shall be built up for ever;" *i.e.*, shall continue firm and stable, and increase and flow in streams from the heavenly treasures, (see also Prov. xiv. 1, and the above quoted Psalm, verse 4, that the "building" means to establish and preserve.) We have seen already, that David in his present condition had no sacrifice commanded in the law; he therefore says, that if Jehovah would preserve and bless Zion, and Jerusalem, and Israel, abundance of sacrifices of righteousness, or lawful sacrifices, would be offered on His altar by His children, even such sacrifices of triumph and joy and thanksgiving, as he had often brought at the payment of his vows, burnt-offerings, and all that accompanies or belongs to them, *i.e.*, the oblations, meat-offerings, and drink-offerings. See remarks on verse 18 of this Psalm in the Introduction, page 28, and compare Ps. lxix. 35, 36, and mark with surprise how presumptuously ignorant men, because of their carnal mindedness and light esteem of revelation, dispute this Psalm being David's at all.

The ardent supplications which the broken-hearted penitent offered in the above sublime and affecting Psalm seem not to have remained long unanswered: "Be of good courage, son; thy sins are forgiven thee," was the communication of the Spirit to David's soul, and the following Psalm contains some of the blessed results.

PS. XXXII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XCIV.

A PSALM OF SERIOUS INSTRUCTION BY DAVID.

1. Happy is he whose transgression is pardoned—
Whose sin is covered.
2. Happy is the man, to whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no self-deception.

3. For I kept silence when my bones wasted,
By reason of my wailing all day long :
4. When day and night thy hand was heavy upon me,
My moisture departed as from the drougths of summer, Selah,
continually.

In the preceding Psalm, the humbled suppliant promised that when Jehovah would be pleased to comfort him—to refresh and revive his wounded spirit—to bind up his broken heart—and by the balm of heaven to cause his broken bones once more to rejoice,—he would endeavour to improve the lesson by teaching the same to transgressors, so that sinners might be converted and brought to God. Jehovah graciously heard him, and communicated comfort and consolation to his soul, and the faithful Psalmist fulfils his promise in giving out this Psalm, which is called a “Maskil,” “a didactic Psalm full of important instruction” for sinners. While in verses 1 and 2 he describes the happiness of the man whose sins and transgressions Jehovah has pardoned and covered, he tells at the same time, in the last clause of the latter verse, that to attain the real conviction and happiness of the pardon of sin, one must be well assured that he is not deceived. “Happy is the man to whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity ;” but take care, O sinner, before thou settest thyself at rest, and examine thy heart, whether a lying spirit does not deceive thee, crying “peace, peace,” in thine ears, when in reality there is no peace; for that man alone is happy “in whose spirit there is no רמיה (Remiah) self-deception.” But how is the sinner to know when his sins are really pardoned? or when he is deceived? Let him come and hear what David says in verses 3 and 4 : “For I kept silence when my bones wasted, by reason of my wailing all day long,” i.e., I was no preacher to others when I felt rottenness of abominable sin in my own bones—I kept silence from communicating Jehovah’s pardoning love to sinners as long as I myself was under sentence of condemnation. As long as this was the case, the Psalmist did not come forth to preach the Gospel to sinners, but sought first to remove the beam out of his own eye. He repented in dust and ashes—he mourned and wailed, fasted and prayed, and supplicated, so that his moisture (his strength and fat) departed as from the drought of summer—as something dried and scorched by the heat of the sun (see Rom. ii. 1—5.) And when was it that he found peace, and felt constrained to teach his lesson to others? The answer follows :

5. I thus acknowledged my sin unto Thee :
And mine iniquity have I not covered :
I said, I will confess my transgression unto Jehovah ;
Then thou forgavest the guilt of my sin, Selah, for ever.

For a sinner to say, “I do feel no peace—I do not feel that Jehovah has pardoned my sin,” is equivalent to his saying, “I have never repented—I have never been grieved for my sin—I have never supplicated Jehovah’s forgiveness.” It is as true as God himself is true, and as His word is true, that He has no pleasure in the death of the sinner—that He never despises the broken heart and the contrite soul—that he will answer the

prayer of the afflicted penitent; for He says, "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

6. Therefore shall every saint offer prayer to Thee
In an acceptable season :
Especially concerning the floods of the mighty waters,
That they might not reach him.
7. Thou art a hiding-place to me; preserve me from distress !
O compass me with songs of deliverance, Selah, always.

This part of the Psalm stands in close connection with the statements contained in the foregoing parts. Hence verse 6 opens, **עַל-זוֹת** (Al-Zoth), "Therefore," or, "on this account," *i.e.*, seeing that such is our relation to God—such our danger, and such our only refuge, "Therefore shall every saint offer prayer to Thee **לְעֵת מְצוֹא** (Leeth Metzso) in an acceptable season," or "at the time when Thou art best to be found;" which, we think, means, that the saint should offer ardent prayers to God at the time when he *yet standeth*, that he may be preserved from falling—that he should never be high-minded, but fear—that he should not wait till he be laid prostrate, but take care in the time of his spiritual vigour—when he enjoys grace in abundance—when Jehovah is near to his soul, (see Isa. lv. 6)—to pray; **רַק לְשֵׁטֶף** (Rak Lesheteph) "Especially," or "in particular, concerning the floods of mighty waters," *i.e.*, concerning gross sin and its bitter consequences, (sin, as well as great misery and danger, is often styled by the Psalmist "floods" and mighty waters, compare Ps. lxvi. chronologically Ps. lxi. 12; lxix. chronologically xeviii. 2; cxliv. or l. 7), "that they might not reach him;" *i.e.*, blessed and happy is he who by wailing and mourning, and humble repentance, has obtained pardon for his sin from a merciful Father; but happier is he who by prayer and supplication is prevented from falling into such fearful misery. Let the saint therefore watch. David then proceeds with his promised instruction from verse 8.

8. I will instruct thee, and teach thee the way in which thou shouldst go :
I will advise thee, for mine eye is upon thee.

In the title David indicated by the word "Maskil," that this is a didactic Psalm—a Psalm containing serious instruction. The verse before us opens with the word **אֶשְׁכִּילְךָ** (Askilcha) "I will instruct thee, and teach thee the way in which thou shouldst go." This was already taught in former parts of the Psalm, where the sinner is warned to repent in dust and ashes, and the saint to watch and pray. "I will advise thee, for mine eye is upon thee," *i.e.*, I pity thee; my heart yearns for thy salvation, and here is an open way for thee. To have or set the eye upon any one, often expresses pity and compassion, counsel and advice. (See Gen. xlv. 21; Ezra v. 5; Jer. xxxix. 12; xl. 4.)

9. Be not without understanding, like the horse, or mule,

Whose ornaments are the bit and bridle, to restrain them :
Let not this be the case with thee.

10. Many are the sorrows of the wicked :
But he who trusteth in Jehovah shall be compassed with
mercy.
11. Rejoice ye in Jehovah, and exult, O ye righteous :
Yea, shout all ye that are upright in heart.

The sense of verse 9 seems to be this: Be not high-minded, be not like a stubborn animal, that thy ornament should needs be stripes and wounds, restraints and punishment; but be thou obedient, bent on doing the will of thy Creator, and be thou governed by his tender mercy.

The Psalm next in order seems to be the second half of the whole. It begins with the same invitation with which the foregoing ended, and it is cheering to mark in it the vivid and glorious praise and adoration, which the Holy Spirit again enabled the humbled saint to yield.

PS. XXXIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XCV.

1. Rejoice in Jehovah, O ye righteous ;
For praise is comely for the upright.
2. Sing praise unto Jehovah to the harp ;
Sing praise to Him to the ten-stringed psalter.
3. Sing unto Him a new song ;
Play skilfully with a sound of triumph.
4. For upright is the word of Jehovah :
And all His works are done in faithfulness ;
5. He loveth righteousness and judgment :
The earth is replenished with Jehovah's tender mercy.
6. By the word of Jehovah the heavens were made ;
And by the breath of His mouth all their hosts.
7. He gathered the waters of the sea as a heap ;
He collected the depth into storehouses.
8. Let all the lands fear Jehovah :
Let all the world's inhabitants stand in awe before Him :
9. For He spake, and it was : He commanded, and there it stood.
10. Jehovah frustrated the counsel of the heathen :
He confounded the devices of the nations.
11. Jehovah's counsel shall stand for ever—
The thoughts of His heart to all generations.
12. Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah—
The people whom He hath chosen for His inheritance.
13. Jehovah looketh down from heaven ;
He beholdeth all the sons of men.
14. From His fixed habitation,
He provideth for all the inhabitants of the earth.
15. For it is He who fashioned all their hearts—
He also surveyeth all their works.

16. No king is saved by the multitude of an host :
The hero is not delivered by the vastness of his strength.
17. A vain thing is the horse for safety :
With all the vastness of its strength it cannot rescue.
18. Behold, the eye of the Lord looketh to those that fear him—
To those that wait in hope for His mercy ;
19. To deliver their soul from death,
And to nourish them in the midst of famine.
20. Our soul waiteth eagerly for Jehovah :
He is our Help, and our Shield.
21. For in Him shall our heart rejoice,
Seeing we have put our trust in His holy name.
22. Let Thy mercy, O Jehovah, be upon us,
According as we hopefully waited for Thee.

From this glorious Psalm we see that, according to David's prayer in Psalm li., not only was the Holy Spirit not taken from him, but that the joy of Jehovah's salvation was fully restored to him. As is said of Samson, that the victories he gained at his death were more glorious than those in his lifetime, so the same may be said spiritually of David. Before his fall he was a Psalmist for the righteous and devoted ones, but he was also to leave balm for the broken-hearted sinner ; and for this he was now fitted, and what his sublime compositions wanted before his fall they had now received. They are more evangelical—fuller of the New Testament spirit—more directed towards the poor sinner—and they have more of free grace, and breathe more of Messianic doctrine, as shall be seen especially in the following Psalm.

PS. XL. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XCVI.

To the Chief Cause of all Events.

A SONG OF PRAISE BY DAVID.

1. I waited hopefully for Jehovah,
And He inclined to me, and heard my loud cries :
2. He then drew me out of the dreary pit of miry clay,
And based my feet upon a rock :
He established my footsteps.
3. He hath also put a new song into my mouth,
Even a song of praise unto our God ;
That many may see it and fear, and put their trust in Jehovah.
4. Happy is the man who founded in Jehovah his confidence :
And turned not to proud things, and to beguiling vanities.

These four verses of this important Messianic Psalm form the groundwork of the whole. In them the Psalmist gives utterance to new feelings of gratitude to the merciful Jehovah who had revealed Himself to him in

an extraordinary manner as a sin-pardoning God. He knew that God, whose praise he had so often celebrated, to be a faithful and gracious Benefactor to all who put their trust in Him, and walk before Him in uprightness and sincerity—he knew Him as that God upon whose name he had so often called in persecution and distress, and had found Him a ready and almighty help : but now he called upon Him after he had grievously provoked Him, at a time when he was unworthy of His answer, and found Him the same compassionate and merciful God. Hence he calls it a *new song* that was put into his mouth, inasmuch as he had never before experienced such a wonderful spiritual deliverance. It was for the first time that God had to pluck him as a brand from the fire—to draw him out from a dreary pit of miry clay—to rescue him from spiritual danger and destruction—to establish him again on the Rock of salvation, and to support his steps in future. But at the same time David was conscious that this spiritual deliverance was no less intended for the instruction of others than his temporal deliverances ; therefore he says in verse 3, that it was done “that many might see it and fear, and put their trust in Jehovah,” *i.e.*, that they might fear sin, and when they fall, not to despair, but know that with Jehovah there is forgiveness, that He may be feared.

5. Numerous things hast Thou performed,
 Even Thou, Jehovah my God, in Thy works of wonder :
 But of Thy purposes concerning us,
 There can no computation be made before Thee :
 Shall I recite them ? declare them ?
 They are more than can be numbered.

A new fountain of light was recently opened to David, in which to contemplate the God of Israel, and in which He appears more glorious and adorable than ever. No part of the revealed character of Jehovah has such an influence on the mind of a fallen but restored child of Adam as that of a “sin-pardoning God.” Nothing is so fitted to fill us at once with admiration and awe, with trembling and comfort, with grief and hope, with humility and exultation, with confession and thanksgiving, as the contemplation of that mysterious love which led Jehovah to devise the plan of salvation by a suffering and dying Saviour. David therefore says, “Numerous things hast Thou performed, even Thou, Jehovah my God, in Thy works of wonder ;” *i.e.*, I can count off many wonders of temporal deliverances which Thou didst grant to Thy covenant people—those signs and miracles Thou didst work in Egypt, at the Red Sea, at Sinai, at Jordan, and in Canaan ; but what are all these in comparison with Thy gracious thoughts and purposes in Thy mysterious plan of salvation, which is still to be brought to perfection ! “But of Thy purposes concerning us there can no computation be made before Thee ;” *i.e.*, we cannot comprehend them—we cannot number their blessed results before Thee in order to render Thee praise enough for them—we cannot estimate, we cannot value these gracious benefits which the world at large is yet to reap as the fruit of Thy gracious and compassionate thoughts towards us ; they are ineffably mighty in grace—they are more than can be numbered. And what is the substance of these extraordinary and gracious thoughts of Jehovah ? It is the following :

6. Sacrifice and offering was not Thy desired object :
Ears hast Thou perforated for me :
But burnt-offerings and sin-offerings Thou didst not require.
7. Then I said, Lo I come,
As it is written of me in the volume of the book :
8. To perform Thy will, O my God, is my chief delight :
For Thy law is within my heart.

The important and Messianic doctrine contained in these three verses was never, as far as we know, brought out in all its bearings, and the want of a thorough critical investigation of the passage has caused many difficulties in the learned world. The Hebrew Lexicographers failed to understand the vast difference between the words רָצוֹן (Ratzon) and חֶפֶז (Chephetz), under both of which words they equally understood the meaning, "to will," "to desire," "to please," or "be inclined," for anything. But there exists a wide difference between them, and that is, that whilst רָצוֹן (Ratzon) means primarily, "the desire" of anything, חֶפֶז (Chephetz) means not only "the desire," but also "the object of the desire." To illustrate this let us take a familiar example: When we feel a desire to go to a particular place in order to see some new and marvellous things, then our *desire* of going thither is called in Hebrew, "Ratzon," *i.e.*, the primary desire of going to that particular place; but the *going* thither is not our chief object, for our chief object is, to see the new things that are there to be seen; and this is called in Hebrew "Chephetz," *i.e.*, the object to be attained by fulfilling the primary desire. Or to take another example: When we desire to go to a public library in order to see some ancient books or manuscripts, then we have a "ratzon," a "first desire," to go to the library, but our "chephetz," our "chief object," is to find out the ancient books, &c. Now when Jehovah commanded Israel to bring sacrifices in case they sinned ignorantly, these sacrifices were not Jehovah's "Chephetz," *i.e.*, His chief object, for His chief object was obedience; but those sacrifices were His "Ratzon," His primary desire that they should do so, in order that by this *schoolmaster* they might be taught what Jehovah's "Chephetz" or "chief object" was, *viz.*, "obedience." The word "Ratzon" therefore is applied throughout the Old Testament Scriptures to denote God's gracious acceptance of the sacrifices of Israel as an atonement for sin ignorantly committed, inasmuch as His "Ratzon," or primary desire, was fulfilled in them; but this was by no means His "Chephetz," or chief object, which was obedience, and not sacrifice for ignorant disobedience. This being the case, we understand why no provision was made under the law for a penitent sinner for sins wilfully committed, for the sacrifices were only the shadows of that great Sacrifice which was to be the "Chephetz," the chief object, inasmuch as it alone could yield that perfect obedience which is Jehovah's "Chephetz," the chief and satisfactory object of atonement. When king Saul disobeyed God's commandment, and pleaded that he had done so in order to bring sacrifices of Amalek's spoil to the Lord, the prophet Samuel said to him, "Hath Jehovah חֶפֶז (Chephetz), so chief an object, or delight, in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying Jehovah's voice? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice," &c., *i.e.*,

obedience is Jehovah's chief object, and the chief object for which sacrifices have been ordered. Samuel then proceeds to tell Saul that there was no provision made in the law of sacrifices for a wilful rebel; for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft (*i.e.*, for which death is the unavoidable doom according to the law), and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. "Because thou hast rejected the word of Jehovah, He hath also rejected thee from being king." (1 Sam. xv. 22, 23.) Such was the case with Saul; he had wilfully violated Jehovah's commandment—committed a sin which there was no sacrifice under the law competent to expiate, and for which Jehovah alone could have granted pardon by the medium of the great sacrifice whose blood cleanses from all sin; but it pleased Him to condemn Saul according to His sovereign prerogative, and to make him a vessel of wrath according to His righteousness. But unto David Jehovah's promises were such, that though he and his children should commit sin, He would not condemn them for it and reject them utterly, as He did Saul, but while He would chastise them on account thereof, He would not remove His mercy from them. (2 Sam. vii. 14, 15.) The reason of this difference was, that David's kingdom was based on that of the Messiah, the great Sacrifice, whose blood can wash away every sin and uncleanness. David was the first person who, when he fell into such sins as the law had made no provision for but death, was led to the fountain opened in his house in the Messiah his descendant, and was washed and thoroughly cleansed from his guilt. He received new light on the relation in which man stands to his God—on the great truth that man must obey Jehovah, and that when he cannot yield a perfect obedience he must either die or give a ransom—that the sacrifice of the law cannot take away wilfully-committed sin, because it was only the "Ratzon," the primary will of Jehovah, that it should foreshadow the great sacrifice, and lead men to see that obedience was His "Chephetz," the inviolable object of His demand from man—and that when man sees that he can by no means satisfy this "Chephetz" by his own power, and that he cannot yield the required obedience of himself, then let him cast himself into the arms of Him who was obedient even unto death, and who alone can satisfy Jehovah's demand against him. Such was David's lesson and experience, and such the doctrine which he was commanded by the Holy Spirit to impart for the benefit of the Church at large.

We now return to our text, in which David records the glorious and wonderful revelation made to him of Jehovah's plan of salvation, wherein His gracious purposes towards man are more numerous and glorious than can be mentioned (see verse 5.) "Sacrifice and offering לֹא חָפֶצֶת (Lo Chaphatzta) was not thy 'Chephetz,' or thy chief object," *i.e.* sacrifice was only thy "Ratzon," thy will and command that by it thy chief object, which is obedience, might be understood. But what, then, is Thy chiefest desire and request of man? "Ears hast thou perforated for me," *i.e.* Thou hast created me ears—Thou hast bestowed on me a rational soul, and created for me the organs of hearing, that I may hear Thy will and do it. This is the sole meaning of the phrase אָזְנַיִם כָּרַיתָ לִּי (Oznayim Karitha li), "Ears hast Thou perforated for me:" Thou hast created me for the promotion of thy glory by obedience, and for this purpose Thou hast made me ears to hear, which includes the spiritual meaning of hearing God,

and of obeying His voice. (Compare Isa. xxxv. 5, xlviii. 8, l. 4, 5, &c.) This was Jehovah's "Chephetz," or chief object, in creating man, *i.e.* for the promotion of His glory by obedience, for which He admirably fitted him; but it was not Jehovah's "Chephetz," or chief object, to create man in order that he should bring sacrifices for disobedience. Sacrifices were only instituted after the fall, when he was no longer able to fulfil the chief purposes for which he was created, *i.e.* when he could no longer yield a perfect obedience in his fallen state, these sacrifices were intended to typify Him who was to become obedient in man's room even unto death.*

Having stated that Jehovah's chief object and desire was not in the sacrifices, but in pure and perfect obedience, the question presented itself, Who is the man that can answer this purpose of his Creator, and render Him perfect obedience, seeing that even such a distinguished saint as David himself could not stand, and that he had even committed such sins as there was no atonement for found in the law? Ah! here comes one of the human family, who, though flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, still could undertake to do what no fallen child of Adam ever could—here comes a voice, and speaks in the name of the whole fallen race; "Then I said," *i.e.* when Jehovah had no "Chephetz" in the sacrifices of the law, which required perfect obedience from fallen man who could not accomplish it, "Then I said,"—then I God-man said, "Lo I come, as it is written of me in the volume of the book,"—as Moses and the prophets speak of me—as all the types of the law foreshadowed me—as I was appointed according to the blessed purposes of the heavenly Father and His good-will towards man—so I come; and as no man on earth is able to perform the acceptable atonement for sin by perfect obedience, I can do both; I will make the perfect atonement by yielding perfect obedience unto death, and will provide blood of sprinkling to wash away all sins and uncleannesses, so that Jehovah's Chephetz will be obtained in me. The Messiah then adds an explanation when he says in verse 8 לעשות רצונה (Laasoth Retzoncha), "To perform Thy will," or to make the atonement acceptable before Thee (*i.e.* by yielding obedience even unto death), "is my chiefest delight (in Hebrew, "my Chephetz," my chief object), for thy law is within my heart," or, "within my bowels;" *i.e.* I am what the law and the prophets all spake of me; what they all testified of me, and what the law foreshadowed in types I am in substance: I will obey; I will pay the required ransom: I will deliver, and I will save.†

* It may be of importance to notice here, that throughout the Old Testament Scriptures we never find Jehovah saying, that He had no "Ratzon," no primary desire, that Israel should bring sacrifices, for this would not agree with the numerous places where it is expressly stated that the sacrifices would be a "Ratzon," a "pleasure," or an accepted atonement before Him. But when sacrifice is contrasted with obedience, it is always said that they (the sacrifices) are not Jehovah's "Chephetz," that they are not the chief desired object—that they are but shadows of the Great Sacrifice which the Messiah was to offer in perfect obedience to Jehovah's "Chephetz."

† We have to perform the pleasing duty of comparing our explanation with that of the apostle Paul of the above passage. In the 10th chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews (we say "his," because we are persuaded that ignorance alone can be so blind as not to see that only a Jew like Paul could compose that sublime epistle) he shows that the sacrifices of the law were shadows only, and hence possessed no power to restore fallen and sinful man to perfection. In verse 5 he says, "Wherefore, when he cometh into the world (*i.e.* when Christ appears) he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me."

The Psalmist having revealed his precious and cheering message, and told sinners how wonderful Jehovah's thoughts and purposes towards man are, proceeds to declare, that in having made it known he only fulfilled his obligation (see Ps. li. chronologically Ps. xciii. 13), and that he found it out by his own experience and the revelation made to him in connection therewith.

9. I have published deliverance in the great congregation :

Behold, I restrain not my lips, O Jehovah, Thou knowest it.

Here we learn two things. 1st, That the apostle understood those words in our Psalm to refer exclusively to Christ, seeing he says simply, "When He cometh into the world He saith," thus indicating that the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of David, spoke here Messiah's language; and who but Messiah could speak thus? 2d, That Paul took the words אָנֹכִי מְרַחֵם לִי (Oz-nim Karitha li), "Ears hast thou perforated for me," in their widest sense, understanding by them that perfect obedience which Jehovah desired of his creatures, and which no man living could perform but Christ by his body, when at the command of God he gave it to be pierced. But while we understand perfectly how Paul took the spiritual essence of this phrase instead of the letter, we cannot believe that the Jews of the Septuagint version had either spirituality or Messianic knowledge enough to understand this passage along with Paul as referring to Messiah's body, else how could they have rendered it *σωμα δε κατηργισεν μοι*, especially how could they have understood *σωμα* under אָנֹכִי? It is highly probable that some ignorant friend of Paul's, not understanding the correctness of the spiritual meaning which Paul put upon the passage, and with the view of reconciling him with the Hebrew text, inserted in the Septuagint version an equal interpretation of the phrase. But, be the case as it may, it is a fact that Paul's argument does not in the least rest upon that phrase, and it matters little whether we render the word by "ears" or body, for his chief argument rests upon the "Lo I come to do thy will, O God;" for in verse 8 he says, "Above, when he said, Sacrifice and offering . . . which are offered by the law . . . thou wouldest not : Then said he, Lo I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

The reader will judge from quotations which we have already made from Dr Hengstenberg, that of such a glorious passage as this we cannot expect anything else than a rationalistic perversion. Indeed, from what we know now of that writer's intoxicated views regarding Messianic prophecy, we could not expect so much spirituality in him as to understand this sublime passage in our Psalm, although we certainly would have expected of one who pretends to be a follower of Him who said, "the Law and the Prophets speak of me," that he would have used other language than he does. The following is another quotation from his work:—"The direct Messianic exposition, which was very wide spread in former times, has but a *weak* foundation in the quotation of verses 6—8 in Heb. x.; and affirmations such as that put forth by the author himself at the beginning of his career . . . lose all meaning when a deeper insight has been obtained into the way and manner in which the New Testament, and especially the Epistle to the Hebrews, handles the declarations of the Old Testament." How applicable are the words of the Psalmist in Psalm l. 16! How is such a man not ashamed to plead that Psalms ii., cx., &c., belong to the Messiah, and to rest his arguments for the same upon the authority of the New Testament quotations made from these Psalms! But we need not enlarge; let the reader compare our foot note on Ps. cx., in this book lxxxvi. where we quote some of Dr H.'s arguments against those infidels who deny that even that glorious oracle refers to Christ, and he will see how Dr H. condemns his own dangerous and pestiferous errors with his own pen and in his own words. Here we would only add that Dr H. would do well to turn to Luke xxiv. 25—27, and hear what the Saviour said to those of His disciples who, like Dr H., could not, or would not, see the death and resurrection of Jesus in the Old Testament scriptures: "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Now, if Dr H. denies any reference to Christ, and to his atonement and resurrection, in Ps. xvi., and in this Psalm, and in both places charges Christ and his apostle with handling in a free manner the Old Testament prophecy, where else will he find those prophecies to which Christ led his weak disciples in the above passage to see his death and resurrection in Old Testament Scripture? O shame and confusion cover the faces of such so-called Christians! What shall the Jew say to the New Testament, if Christian teachers, because of their blindness and carnal mindedness, thus scandalize and pervert it? Or does Dr H. presume to understand Old Testament prophecy better than Christ and his apostles? If so, who is his Saviour, and where is the basis of his Christianity?

10. Thy deliverance have I not hid within my heart,*
Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation have I proclaimed :
I have not concealed Thy mercy and Thy truth from the great
congregation.
11. O Jehovah, withdraw not Thy compassion from me :
Let Thy mercy and Thy truth continually preserve me.
12. For innumerable evils have compassed me about ;
My iniquities overtook me, that I could not look up :
They were more than hair on my head, and my heart failed
me.
13. Be pleased, O Jehovah, to deliver me :
O Jehovah, make haste to become my help.
14. Let those be ashamed and confounded together
Who seek my soul to destroy it :
Let those be driven back and put to confusion
Who desire my misfortune.
15. Let those receive shame as their due reward,
Who proclaim, regarding me, Exult ! Exult !
16. All those who seek Thee shall rejoice and be glad in Thee :
Let those who love Thy salvation continually say,
" Jehovah shall be exalted."
- 17. When I am afflicted and needy, the Lord will care for me :
O my God, Thou art my help and my deliverer ;
O make no delay !

Connected with the preceding Psalm and the prophecy contained in it regarding the Messiah's atonement for sinners, we think it proper to introduce another Psalm which is in itself exceedingly obscure, but which, we think, cannot be better explained than in conjunction with Messiah's incarnation, death, and resurrection, and his becoming Head of the Church. The Psalm referred to is the cxxxix., and though from its first part we are disposed to conclude that it may have been composed by David during the first humbling and grievous impression which the awakening of conscience after his fall produced, still as he confesses in it that all his hope rests on the incarnate Messiah his Descendant, who was declared in the preceding Psalm to be the only hope and consolation of guilty men, and as the only sacrifice for sin, we thought it would conduce to its better illustration to bring it in after our exposition of the Messianic prophecy in that Psalm. Some critics have concluded that this Psalm could not have been composed by David, because there are some Chaldaisms in it, as they call them ; but this is altogether a mistaken opinion.

* The explanation of the word צֶדֶק (Tzedek), which we have rendered here and in the preceding verse by deliverance, the reader will find in a foot-note to Ps. lxx., in this book, Ps. lx. 5. The "deliverance," to which the Psalmist here refers, is his own deliverance from the consequences of his sin, and the deliverance to sinners in this Psalm was first preached by him when he made public confession of his sin.

PS. CXXXIX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XCVII.

“To the Chief Cause of all Events.”

A PSALM OF DAVID.

1. O Jehovah, Thou hast searched me out, and Thou knewest all :
2. Thou knewest my down-sitting and my up-rising ;
Thou didst discern my thoughts afar off.
3. My path and my couch hast Thou spied out ;
And Thou art acquainted with all my ways.
4. When there was not a word upon my tongue,
Lo, O Jehovah, Thou knewest everything.
5. Behind and before Thou hast enclosed me,
And hast laid Thy hand upon me.
6. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me :
It is exceedingly high ; I cannot overcome it.
7. Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit ?
Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence ?
8. Should I climb up into heaven, Thou art there :
Or should I make my bed in hell, Thou art there.
9. Should I mount with the wings of the morning star,
And seek rest in the uttermost end of the sea ;
10. Even there Thy hand would lead me,
And Thy right hand lay hold on me.
11. When I said, Surely darkness will overshadow me,—
Light was about me even by night.
12. Yea, even darkness can hide nothing from Thee :
But night shineth as day, darkness as light.
13. For Thou hast taken possession of my reins :
Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

Expositors are all agreed that in this part of the Psalm the Omniscience and Omnipresence of God are treated of, a fact that needs no confirmation, seeing that it lies on the very surface of the whole. But we think it as clear that this description of these divine attributes must have originated in a certain occurrence in David's life, as indeed the very first verse testifies, “O Jehovah, Thou hast searched me out, and Thou knewest all.” The reference is evidently to David personally, and is not of a general character, as some erroneously imagine ; and the Psalm is characterized throughout by the same feature, viz., its reference primarily to the Psalmist himself, or to a person of whom he could speak in himself. It needs not much searching or much argument to prove that it must refer to David, when, to his humbling surprise, he discovered that all he had done in the strictest secrecy, whether in his palace, or by Joab in the camp through means of a private letter, was naked and open to the eye of God, who told him of it all by the prophet Nathan, who, after pronouncing sentence, added these words, “For thou didst it secretly ; but I will do this thing before

all Israel, and before the sun." (2 Sam. xii. 12.) This we consider to be the basis of the Psalm, as by this event David was taught that there was nothing secret from the Omnipresent God—that neither distance, nor height, nor depth, nor darkness can hide anything from His omniscience. The figures in all the thirteen verses are so pure, and so sublime and expressive, that they require no explanation. In verse 13 the Psalmist states how it is that God has power even over our thoughts everywhere: "For Thou hast taken possession of my reins,"—and when is it that He takes this entire possession of our reins, which implies thoughts, desires, and actions? The answer follows, "Thou hast covered me, or encompassed me, entirely in my mother's womb." It is from the first moment of our existence that our Creator claims us as His, even with all our thoughts and desires.

As in the foregoing Psalm, when sacrifice and offering were declared to be inefficacious, and that a perfect obedience was required of man which he could not yield, the Messiah is represented as entering His office, and exclaiming, "Lo I come to do thy will, O God," &c.; so in our Psalm, when poor man is represented as helpless and miserable in the sight of the Omniscient One, who from the first moment of his existence takes knowledge and account of all his thoughts and ways, and from whose Omnipresence there can be no hiding-place, then the Saviour comes and represents his wonderful incarnation, his offices, and the results of his mediation.

14. I will praise Thee for the purpose for which
I was wonderfully distinguished above all thy marvellous works;
And this, my soul loveth exceedingly.*
15. My own person was not removed from Thee,
Even when I was formed in a mysterious manner—
When I was curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth.†
16. My members, yet unborn, have Thine eyes beheld,
And in Thy book they shall all be written :

* The words *עַל כִּי* (Al Ki) at the beginning of this verse are expressive of the purpose for which the wonderful and mysteriously distinguished incarnation of Messiah took place: "I will praise Thee for the purpose for which I was wonderfully distinguished." *נִפְלְאוֹתַי* (Niphlethi) implies a distinguished workmanship, and here it refers to Messiah's creation, that in it he was distinguished from all men, and which he calls a wonder above all the marvellous works of Jehovah. But it must also refer to the "purpose," which no doubt excelled in mystery and wonder all the marvels of nature. So the last clause, "And this my soul loveth, or regardeth, exceedingly," i.e. the purpose for which I was distinguished.

+ "My own person, or I myself," so *נִצְמִי* (Otzmi) here means, being used instead of the pronoun, "my own self,—my own person was not removed, or separated from thee," *כָּרַד* (Kachad) in Niph. often signifies "to cut off," "to remove" a thing, and thus make it disappear. (Job. iv. 7, xv. 28, xxii. 20; the last passage if literally rendered is an exact parallel to ours. Zech. xi. 9, 16, where it means "to be removed," or "taken off.") This is the literal meaning of this clause, that his person was not separated from God; and when? "Even when I was formed, *בְּסֶתֶר* (Bassetter), mysteriously, or in a mysterious manner—when I was curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth." The last expression is only a figure of the humiliation from such a height to such a depth.

- In the course of days they shall be created,
Even to the very last of them.*
17. How precious are to me Thy friends, O God !
How exceedingly great is their number !†
 18. Should I count them, they exceed in number the sand :
At my resurrection, and during my eternal existence,
I shall be with Thee.‡
 19. When Thou, my God, shalt have slain the wicked.
And caused the bloody men to depart from me ;
 20. Those who wickedly rebel against Thee ;
Thine adversaries who take up Thy name falsely.
Shall I not hate them that hate Thee, O Jehovah ?—
Not abhor those that rise up against Thee ?
 22. Yea, I hate them with a perfect hatred ;
I count them as my own enemies.

Thus far, we think, extends the Messianic prophecy, and unless we understand it, from verse 14 to 22, to refer exclusively to Messiah, nothing

* גַּלְמִי (Galmi) which is rendered in the common version, "My substance yet being imperfect," is taken from גֹּלֶם (Golem), a word which in this sense occurs only once in the Bible, but which is often used in the Talmud, and has several significations. The chief meaning of it is, anything to be made, but not yet wrought ; at the same time it denotes the mass, or particles out of which the supposed things are to be produced. "Galmi," in our verse, with the pronoun, signifies, the mystical body of him who speaks in these verses—his members yet unborn—the members of the body, though not yet fashioned. These Jehovah saw and foreknew—for these *mystical* members it was that the incarnation of Christ their head took place : "and in thy book they shall all be written." This expression is explained by no commentator, and all their conjectures have no taste and no appearance even of sense ; and we maintain that unless we take the whole passage as an allegorical prophecy of the incarnation of Christ, and of the great purpose of His becoming flesh, we can have only an unintelligible confusion instead of a noble Psalm. But the prophecy proceeds from the statement, that the Lord foresaw all the members of the Church of Christ before they were born, and that all would be written in His book, in the book of life, to declare further, יָמִיִּם יוֹצְאָרִי (Yamim Yutzaru), "In the course of days they shall be created," or "in the course of time they shall be created." A similar phrase is that of Job xxxii. 7, "I said, or thought, יָמִיִּם יִדְבְּרִי (Yamim Yedaberu), days would speak," i.e. that men would be taught to speak wisdom in the course of days—or the longer they live the wiser they must be, &c. But in our verse it means that in the course of days they shall be created, "Even to the very last of them," or "that even one of them shall not be wanting."

† רֵעִי (Reecha) in this verse is usually rendered "thoughts" by translators and commentators. The reason is twofold, 1st, They know not what else to make of it ; and 2d, Because רֵעִי (Reii), in verse 2, must be so understood. But in this sense the word appears only this once in the Bible, for it always means "friend," or "favourite," &c. ; and in verse 2 it is used to denote the favourite thoughts and desires, with special reference to David's melancholy fall. But in our verse it has its common meaning, viz. "friends ;" "How precious, or how dear, are thy friends to me !" He calls them "thy friends," as elsewhere He says, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me." Again, "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost," &c. (John xvii. 6, 12.)

‡ "At my resurrection or at my awakening," for הִקִּיצוֹתִי (Hekitzothi), stands here like שִׁבְתִּי (Shivty), "my down-sitting," קִמִּיתִי (Kumi), "my up rising," in verse 2 ; so "Hekitzothi" must mean "at my awakening," or "at my resurrection," i.e. when I rise from the grave, יְעוֹדִי (Veodi), "and during my eternal existence (see about the latter word Psalm civ., in this book Ps. vii. 33, cxlvi., or lxxvi. 2, &c.), יִמָּכֵךְ (Imach), "I shall be with thee," or I shall spend eternity after the resurrection with Thee in thy presence (compare verse 15, which stands in close connection with this.)

can be made of the passage whatever. We have confined our remarks to the critical notes, in which we merely explain our rendering of the Hebrew text, and from which the reader will gather our opinion as to its Messianic application, and it remains with him to adopt it, or to search for more light. As for ourselves we are not only confident that all other interpretations bury this noble passage in obscurity, and make no sense of it, but we are fully persuaded that the very extraordinary choice of the highest poetical expressions, and the strange words which are employed in this part of the Psalm, show that the Psalmist wrapt in them a Messianic mystery. If we consider other Messianic Psalms, such as the ii., lxxii., lxxxix., &c., which must refer primarily to David and his temporal descendants, but which receive their literal fulfilment in the Messiah alone, we can easily understand the fluctuations which we meet, as in this Psalm, and in the preceding one, where David, beginning to speak of himself, is carried by the Spirit into a distant region, and speaks mysterious things regarding the Messiah his Descendant, and then turns again to his personal subject. German rationalism cannot understand this, for it compares the holy and inspired Oracles with human and profane poetry; but as soon as we remember that the Spirit always took advantage of the Psalmist's present circumstances in order to make him utter His revelations, then we must see and expect that individual and Messianic references will very frequently be intermixed with them. In the last two verses David returns to the subject he had left, viz., the description of Jehovah's Omniscience and Omnipresence. They are a prayer connected with these attributes:

23. Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Prove me, and know my secret thoughts;
24. And see if there be in me any way of provocation:
Then lead Thou me in the way to eternity.

These two verses stand especially in close connection with the first, of which the following twelve are but an explanation. There he said, "Thou hast searched me out, and Thou knewest all;" and here he prays, that the Lord would continue to do so when He sees him beginning to wander from the right path; and that He would correct him, and lead him in the right way to eternity.

There are several Psalms which require to be taken up before we turn again to the history of David to consider the fulfilment of the threatenings which the Lord had denounced against him by Nathan, and how a sword began actually to rage in his own house until it broke out in Absalom's rebellion. We have already seen in Psalm xl., or, in this book, the Psalm preceding the last, that though it began with triumph and joy, it ended in bitter complaints concerning enemies. Indeed it was naturally to be expected, that after David had made public confession of his sin, many wicked characters would begin to despise and calumniate him, on the pretext that he was no more God's favourite, seeing that he had so grievously sinned against Him. The following Psalms not only indicate this, but also that conspiracies began to be formed against him immediately after he had made his public confession and humiliation. At the same time we must keep in mind, that his harp was never his own, but was always employed

in the service of his God. Whatever his circumstances were, they, as well as himself, were made the instruments in the hand of the Spirit of pouring forth Oracles regarding Messiah his Descendant. When he lamented his desperate condition under Saul, the Spirit made him speak the language of his persecuted Son under Herod and the wicked Pharisees. When he was lifted up to the skies by victories and glorious promises, he indeed strung his harp to utter his own joy, and to praise in his own language, but the Spirit within him made him celebrate joyous victories to be achieved by a greater David than he. But now he was in a position when his enemies rapidly increased because of his fall, and persecutors became emboldened because they thought him forsaken of God. David came now, under the burden of his sins, to bewail his sufferings as the fruits thereof, and while they were graciously pardoned, yet the physical sufferings which he had to endure in consequence of them, were not only intended to manifest Jehovah's holiness and righteousness, but also to be the means of producing Oracles for the Church regarding the Man of Sorrows, who, though he had no sin of his own, stood heavy laden at Golgotha's cross with the sins and iniquities of his people, for which his body was pierced and his blood shed. The Psalms to which we refer are the lxix. to lxxi. inclusive, and the xxv. and ciii. Among these five Psalms, which seem to belong to the period alluded to, there is one (the lxix.) which, if we were to regard as referring exclusively to David, we would not only make him guilty of uttering exaggerations beyond all limits of poetry whether inspired or profane, but we would also deny the assertion of the apostles of Christ, who testify that it speaks of Messiah's sufferings, and some prophecies in it concerning him which He himself minded to fulfil even in his agonics on the cross. On the other hand, it would be greatly wrong were we to maintain in any way that that Psalm refers exclusively to Christ, for many expressions, even whole verses in it, cannot but refer to David alone. Our limits, however, forbid us entering into particulars with respect to these subjects, however important they are; but in our remarks on the preceding Psalm, and elsewhere, we showed sufficiently how the very nature of inspiration, combined with the Psalmist's circumstances, produced such an effect, that not only did he often speak in the spirit of Messiah, though in his own person, but that also in one and the same Psalm there might be several references to himself, while whole prophecies might be uttered referable exclusively to Messiah. The very title of Psalm lxix. shows that it contains many prophecies regarding the Messiah and His Church, for *על-שושנים* (Al Shoshanim), "regarding the Lilies," signifies this (compare our preface to Ps. xlv., in this book lxxxvii., also Ps. lx., in this book lxxxviii., title), though the prophecies themselves may vary between cheerfulness and lamentation, for salvation began with the latter and ended with the former.

PS. LXIX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XCVIII.

"To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A PSALM OF DAVID REGARDING THE LILIES.

1. Save me, O God, for the waters reach my very soul.

2. I sink in the mire of the deep, where there is no standing :
I am come into the depth of waters, where a flood covereth me.
3. I am weary with crying ; my throat is parched :
Mine eyes waste away, while I wait for my God.
4. More than the hairs of my head are those that hate me without
cause :
Powerful are my treacherous enemies who seek to destroy me.
What I never took away, I am compelled to restore.
5. O God, Thou knowest wherein I dealt foolishly ;
And my faults are not concealed from Thee.
6. Let not those who wait for Thee, be ashamed in me,
O Jehovah Lord of Hosts :
Let not those who seek Thee, be confounded in me, O God of
Israel.
7. Because for Thy sake have I suffered reproach—
Confusion hath covered my face.
8. I am become a stranger to my brethren,
And an alien to the children of my mother.
9. For the zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up,
And the reproaches of those that reproach Thee have fallen
on me.
10. When my soul dropped away with fasting,
It was made a reproach to me.
11. When I made sackcloth my garments, I became their proverb.
12. They who sit at the gate talk against me,
And I became the song of the drunkards.
13. But I pray unto Thee, O Jehovah, for an acceptable time ;
O God, answer me in the multitude of Thy mercy—
According to the certainty of thy salvation.
14. Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink :
O let me be delivered from those that hate me,
And from the depth of waters.
15. Let not the water-flood overwhelm me ;
And let not the deep swallow me up ;
And let not the pit close its mouth upon me.
16. Answer me, O Jehovah ; for rich is Thy tender mercy :
According to the multitude of Thy compassions turn unto me.
17. And hide not Thy face from Thy servant ; for I am in distress ;
O make haste to answer me.
18. O draw near to my soul, and redeem her :
Because of mine enemies, rescue me.
19. Thou hast known my reproach, my shame and my confusion :
All mine adversaries are before Thee.
20. Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am ill :
And I waited for pity, but there is none :
And for comforters, but I found none.
21. And they gave me gall for my meat ;

- And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink *
22. Their table before them shall become a snare,
And as a trap of stumbling for retribution.
 23. Their eyes shall become dim, that they see not ;
And make their loins to shake continually.
 24. Pour on them Thine indignation,
And let Thy fierce anger seize them.
 25. Their palace shall become desolate ; none shall dwell in their
tents.
 26. For they have persecuted him whom Thou hast smitten,
And they scorn the pain of those whom Thou hast wounded.
 27. Pronounce sentence of condemnation for their iniquity,
And let them not partake of Thy deliverance.
 28. They shall be blotted out of the book of life ;
And they shall not be enrolled among the righteous.
 29. But afflicted and wounded as I am,
Thy salvation, O God, shall lift me up on high.

* The deeper we enter into a contemplation of the strong and melancholy complaints expressed in this Psalm, the clearer we must see how false and foolish it is to make any attempt to apply them to David himself, who in no period of his life, even under the severest persecutions he endured whether from Saul or Absalom, could have used such language to the Omniscient God in regard to sufferings he never experienced. Nor need we say much about Hengstenberg's monstrous absurdity of his *ideal man*, which he tries to introduce here (as in the xxii. Psalm) as the speaker and subject ; for, besides the power of the Spirit by whom David was guided in composing this Psalm, besides the very numerous quotations made by Christ and His apostles from it, as referring to him, and besides our knowledge of the literal fulfilment these expressions received in Christ and His sufferings, it would be presumption in any man to make complaints before God of things he never experienced ; and even a profane piece of poetry like this would be nothing else than a piece of nonsense. But when we remember Christ and His sufferings in whom all these things were literally fulfilled, it becomes to us a most valuable Oracle, and a living monument and witness of the power of prophecy—we see in it that Omniscient Jehovah, who knows the end from the beginning—we see the unity and completeness of Jehovah's eternal plans—how that the minutest occurrences connected with the great plan of salvation, were open unto Him from eternity ; and the Rock of our faith thus becomes more conspicuous, more glorious, and more wonderful than ever. What could we make of such expressions as these, "What I never took away, I am compelled, or forced, to restore?" (verse 4.) Was not this wonderfully fulfilled in Christ in many points of view ? Or why was the Saviour so careful to fulfil the prophecy contained in verse 21, even when bleeding on the cross ? "That the Scripture might be fulfilled, Christ said, I thirst." Doth not this imply that this prophecy could not, and was not intended to be fulfilled in any but in Christ ? Where is now Hengstenberg's dream about the *ideal man* ? If this prophecy could be fulfilled in any other than in Christ, why was he so solicitous, even on the cross, to fulfil it ? The objection of Dr H. to the Messianic reference in verse 5, which he denies as being applicable to Christ, falls to the ground as soon as we lead him back to the ii. Psalm, and to the lxxii., which even he acknowledges to refer to Messiah, the last and eternal King of David's covenant, though its primary references are to the temporal kingdom of David himself and his descendants. It is the King of David's covenant who complains of persecution and sufferings in this Psalm, and though it begins with David, whose sufferings came upon him in consequence of his great sin, it ends and receives its complete fulfilment in the Messiah, who suffered for sin though not his own.

We think it needless to dispute again the false feelings of some individuals who shrink at the judgments pronounced by the Spirit against the rebels and enemies of Christ and his Church in the latter part of this Psalm. We spoke of the subject at large in the Introduction (pp. 19—23), and would only add here that such individuals should remember that the Spirit of prophecy speaks here in the name of the high and terrible God who will avenge Himself of all His enemies sooner or later. If their feelings cannot stand these threatenings of the Old Testament Oracles, let them hear even the loving and sympathetic Paul saying, "He that loveth not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema," or accursed.

30. I will praise the name of God with a song of triumph,
And will magnify Him with thanksgiving.
31. And this shall please Jehovah more than an ox,
Than a bullock with horn and hoof.
32. When the meek shall have seen this they shall rejoice :
O ye who seek after God, let your heart be quickened.
33. For Jehovah listeneth to the needy ;
And He never despised those that are prisoners for Him.
34. Let the heavens and the earth praise Him,
The sea, and all that moveth therein.
35. For God will save Zion, and build up the cities of Judah ;
And they shall abide there, and have it in possession.
36. Yea, the seed of His servants shall inherit it ;
And those that love His name shall dwell therein.*

The next Psalm, which connects the preceding one with the lxxi., consists, with the exception of a few slight alterations of expression, of the last five verses of Ps. xl. It is extracted for the purpose of being often repeated in time of trouble, as it contains an ardent prayer for the persecuted child of God. It has therefore in the title לְהִזְכִּיר (Lehaskir), "To be remembered," or "To be kept as a memorial," *i.e.* to be often repeated. David seems to have extracted it for his own consolation in time of distress, and here it forms the introduction to Ps. lxxi.

PS. LXX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. XCIX.

"To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A PSALM OF DAVID, TO BE KEPT IN MEMORY.

1. O God, come for my deliverance ;
O Jehovah, make haste to become my help.
2. Let those be ashamed and confounded, who seek after my soul :
Let those be driven back and put to confusion,
Who desire my misfortune.
3. Let those receive shame, as their due reward,
Who proclaim regarding me, Exult ! Exult !
4. All those who seek Thee shall rejoice, and be glad in Thee :
Let those who love Thy salvation, continually say,
"Jehovah shall be exalted."

* The striking similarity between the language used by the triumphant sufferer here in verses 29, 30, 32, 33, and that used in Ps. xxii., in this book xiii. 22-27, shows distinctly their relation to each other in point of Messianic reference, and that Messiah alone speaks in both, though some passages were fulfilled in David, his father and type, and under the temporal dominion of David's house (compare exposition of the verses in Ps. xxii. referred to above.) On the last two verses of this Psalm compare exposition of the last two of Ps. li., in this book xciii. and also Introduction, page 28.

5. When I am afflicted and needy, O God make haste to me :
Thou art my Helper and Deliverer ;
O Jehovah, make no delay.

PS. LXXI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. C.

1. In Thee, O Jehovah, have I taken shelter ;
O let me never be put to shame.
2. In Thy righteousness deliver me and rescue me :
Incline Thine ear unto me, and save me.
3. Be to me a rock of habitation, whither I may always resort :
Thou hast ordained my help, for Thou art my Rock and my Fortress.
4. O my God, rescue me from the hand of the wicked ;
From the grasp of the cruel and violent robber.
5. For Thou art my hope, O Jehovah my Lord ;
My confidence, even from my youth :
6. On Thee I leaned, since my birth—even from my mother's lap :
Thou art my Shearer ;
Of Thee is my praise continually.*
7. I am become like a sight of wonder unto many :†
But Thou art my strong defence.
8. My mouth shall be filled with Thy praise ;
With Thy glory all the day long.
9. Thou wilt not cast me off in the time of old age :
When my strength faileth, Thou wilt not forsake me.‡
10. For mine enemies speak against me,
And they that watch for my soul take counsel together,
11. Saying, " God hath abandoned him :
Pursue, and seize him ; for there is no deliverer."

* Many interpretations have been given to the word גִּזִּי (Gozi) in this verse, all alike false, and devoid of meaning. But we do not see why it should not have been taken according to its only meaning, as it comes from גִּזַּז (Gazoz) "to shear," though the second *י* is often dropped, as in Job i. 20 ; Nah. i. 12, &c. The figure in our passage is very sublime. The Lord, says David, preserves him for His praise, as one keeps, nourishes, and defends a lamb for its wool: "Thou art my Shearer"—and how? inasmuch as "Of Thee is my praise continually," i.e. Thou art always the subject of my praise, and therefore dost Thou grant me deliverance, that I may praise Thee.

+ "A sight of wonder," or "astonishment," i.e. a sight of woe which draws many to look at me with surprise, as some thing strange and extraordinary.

‡ Bishop Horsley, in his Critical Notes on this Psalm, says, "I am entirely at a loss for the particular subject of this Psalm. It suits not David, who, in his old age, had no troubles ; it suits not Christ, who had no old age. Is not the suppliant the Church in these latter ages, when faith, to all appearance, is wearing out?" But the loss at which he was to understand how the 9th verse can refer to David, lay in his misunderstanding it—not knowing that the Hebrew זִקְנָה (Ziknah) includes all the years of manhood, and is applied often to very different stages of life. But surely all David's persecutions and sufferings shortly before, and during, and after Absalom's rebellion, occurred when David was already upwards of fifty years of age, though he enjoyed peace for a few years before his latter end. But lastly, both verses, 9 and 18, are prayers for the future.

12. O God, stand not at a distance from me :
O my God, make haste for my assistance.
13. Let the calumniators of my soul be ashamed and consumed :
Let those be covered with reproach and confusion who seek my hurt.
14. But I will continually hope, and greatly multiply all Thy praise.
15. My mouth shall declare Thy righteousness,
Thy salvation all the day long ; for I know not their number.*
16. I will proceed to relate the mighty deeds of Jehovah my Lord ;
I will commemorate Thy righteousness, Thine alone.
17. O God, thou hast taught me from my youth,
And until now have I declared thy works of wonder.
18. And Thou also, O God, wilt not forsake me when I am old
and grey headed,
Until I have declared Thy power unto this generation—
Thy mighty deeds to all those that are to come.
19. O how exceedingly high is Thy righteousness !
Thou art He who hast done marvellous things :
O God, who is like unto Thee !
20. Thou who hast made me experience many and sore afflictions,
Thou shalt turn and shalt quicken me ;
And from the depths of the earth Thou shalt draw me up.
21. Thou wilt increase my happiness, and encompass me with comfort.
22. I also will praise Thee and Thy faithfulness with the psaltery :
O my God, I will sing praise unto Thee to the harp :
O Thou Holy One of Israel !
23. My lips shall shout for joy when I shall sing Thy praise ;
Also my soul, which Thou hast redeemed.
24. My tongue also shall talk of Thy righteousness all day long ;
When those are ashamed and confounded who sought my hurt.

The next Psalm, which, we think, belongs to the same period, is the xxv. It is alphabetical, though, like the xxxiv., it wants the verse answering to the letter **י**, but this is supplied by an additional verse at the end, beginning with the letter **י**, exactly like the Psalm above mentioned ; and the addition is made in order to fill up the number of the alphabet. It has also two verses beginning with the letter **נ**, because the letter **ב** is wanting ; and two verses beginning with the letter **ק**, because the letter **פ** is wanting. All this, however, seems to be design more than anything else, because the compactness and completeness of the poem show that even the number was strictly observed.

* " Their number," i.e. the number of the deliverances which Thou hast granted me ; therefore I must continue to praise while I live, because I know not when to stop.

1. Unto Thee, O Jehovah, do I lift up my soul.
 2. My God, in Thee have I put my trust :
 Let me not be ashamed—let mine enemy not triumph
 over me.
 3. Yea, let all that wait on Thee not be put to shame :
 But the vain rebels shall be put to shame.
 4. Make known to me Thy ways, O Jehovah : teach me Thy
 paths.
 5. Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me, for Thou art the God
 of my salvation :
 For Thee I hopefully looked all day long.
 6. Remember Thy compassion, O Jehovah, and Thy tender
 mercies ;
 For they are from everlasting.
 7. The sins of my youth, and my transgressions, remember not :
 Remember Thou me according to Thy tender mercies,
 Even for the sake of Thy goodness, O Jehovah.
 8. Good and upright is Jehovah ; therefore doth He conduct
 sinners in the way.
 9. He maketh the meek to go on in straight order ;
 Yea, He instructeth the meek regarding his way.
 10. All the ways of Jehovah are grace and truth,
 To those who observe His covenant and His testimonies.
 11. For Thy name's sake, O Jehovah, pardon my sin ; for it
 is great.
 12. Whoever is the man that feareth Jehovah,
 He will instruct him of the way which he should choose.
 13. His soul shall rest in splendour,
 And his seed shall inherit the earth.
 14. The secret of Jehovah, is with them that fear Him ;
 In order to make them understand fully His covenant.
 15. Mine eyes are always directed unto Jehovah ;
 For he shall pluck out my feet from the net.
 16. Turn unto me, and pity me, for I am lonely and afflicted.
 17. The distresses of my heart are increased :
 O draw me out of my difficulties.
 18. Behold my affliction and my misery, and pardon all my sin.
 19. Behold mine enemies, for they are many ;
 And how they hate me with a violent hatred.
 20. Guard my soul and deliver me :
 Let me not be put to shame ; for I have taken shelter in
 Thee.
 21. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me ; for I wait for
 Thee.
 22. Redeem Israel, O God, from all his distresses.

PS. CIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CII.

A PSALM OF DAVID.

1. Bless Jehovah, O my soul ; and all that is in me, His holy name.
2. Bless Jehovah, O my soul, and forget none of His rewards.
3. It is He who forgiveth all thy sins—who healeth all thy diseases ;
4. Who redeemeth from destruction thy life—
Who crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness ;
5. Who multiplieth thine ornaments with rich bounties ;
That thou mayest renew thy youth like an eagle.
6. Jehovah executeth righteousness and judgment for all the
oppressed.
7. He revealed His ways to Moses—to the children of Israel His
mighty works.
8. Merciful and compassionate is Jehovah ;
Longsuffering, and exceedingly gracious.
9. He will not contend always ; neither will He strive for ever.
10. He hath not dealt with us according to our sins,
Neither hath He rewarded to us according to our iniquities.
11. For as is the height of heaven above the earth,
So great is His mercy towards them that fear Him.
12. As is the distance of the east from the west,
So far hath He removed from us our transgressions.
13. Like as a father pitieth his children,
So pitieth Jehovah those that fear Him.
14. For He knoweth our frame—He remembereth that we are dust.
15. Poor man ! his days are like the grass :
Like the flower of the field, so is he even in his blossom.
16. For when the wind puffeth at him, he is gone,
And even his place acknowledgeth him no more.*
17. But Jehovah's mercy toward those that fear Him
Endureth from everlasting to everlasting,
And His benevolence extendeth to children's children ;
18. To those who preserve His covenant,
And who remember His precepts to perform them.
19. Jehovah hath established His throne in the heavens,
And His kingdom ruleth over all.
20. Bless Jehovah, O ye his angels, who are mighty in strength,
Who fulfil His word, in obedience to the voice of His com-
mand.
21. Bless Jehovah, all ye His hosts—
Ye His ministers, that perform His pleasure.

* This verse refers to the man who at the blast of Jehovah's wrath is carried off and is no more to be found. Compare Ps. xxxvii., in this book Ps. xxxv. 35, 36, and see also verse 37, and how exactly it corresponds with verse 17 in our Psalm.

22. Bless Jehovah, all ye his works, in all places of His dominion.
Bless Jehovah, O thou my soul.

ABSALOM'S REBELLION, AND THE PSALMS COMPOSED BY DAVID DURING HIS FLIGHT.

There is scarcely another individual history in the sacred volume so fraught with instruction in the ways of God and his dealings with man—so rich in the development of His purposes and plans in their manifold branches—and so full of terrible examples of His severe but just judgments on His dearest children for their sins, as that of David at the period of Absalom's unnatural rebellion. We have already observed that by David's humiliation after his sin, the punishment spiritually, on account of it, was removed, but the temporal judgments denounced by Nathan were not cancelled. Though the Lord, therefore, had put away his sin that he should not die, yet it was decreed that the sword should not depart from his house, but that evil should be raised against him out of the same.

Accordingly, the rod in its wrath first appeared in the abominable and outrageously revolting crime which Amnon perpetrated on his sister Tamar, and its results. This enormity kindled the flame of revenge in the heart of Absalom, who was the unhappy damsel's brother by the same mother as well as the same father, and he resolved to be satisfied with nothing less than the death of the criminal Amnon. Two years the fire burned within him, until at last, having sought and found a fitting opportunity, he extinguished it in the blood of his victim, and fled to his grandfather, Talmai, King of Geshur. (2 Sam. xiii.) Such was the first stroke which fell on David; one of his sons died an ignominious death, and another became a fratricide and fugitive in consequence of it. Three years passed in mourning and grief, until a father's pity and compassion overcame every other feeling, and at the end of that period, through the interference of Joab and the instrumentality of the wise woman of Tekoah, the corrupt and wicked fratricide was brought again to Jerusalem; and shortly afterwards his father was reconciled to him and granted him even more freedom than he had enjoyed before. But this reconciliation and parental kindness produced no impression on the murderous heart of Absalom: wicked ambition took possession of him, and he began immediately to plot against and undermine his father's throne, and make himself master of the kingdom. He procured him chariots, and horses, and servants, and with the cunning of a serpent he endeavoured by generosity and flattery to win the hearts of the men of Israel. We have seen from the language used by David in the Psalms which we have last considered, that after his sin, and the rebuke administered to him by Nathan, were made public, many bitter enemies arose against him; and though they were afraid openly to rebel, yet they plotted privately all the while, and waited their occasion. Of this Absalom was well aware; and placing himself daily at the door by which parties went in to the king for judgment, he kissed and flattered them; and when the discontented persons who lost their causes came out, he excited them against the king by insinuating that their cause was righteous, and that they had been denied justice by the king and his counsellors; telling them, at the same time, that were he on the throne he would do them justice. "So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel." This treasonable procedure was carried on during four years; and when Absalom thought

his plan was ripe, he begged of his father to be allowed to go to Hebron that he might pay a vow to the Lord. Under this religious cloak he obtained the desired permission, and set out accompanied by his fellow-conspirators, as also by some hundreds of innocent men who went with him from Jerusalem. Having gathered a numerous band together, and finding himself surrounded by a sufficient number of rebels, he caused himself to be openly proclaimed king. Thus he rose in wicked and unnatural rebellion against his aged father, and the blinded Israelites joined him in multitudes.

Tidings of what was going on at Hebron soon reached David's ears, and the threatened sword of heaven's vengeance pierced his breast. The experience he had gathered in former times, and his love to Zion and Jerusalem, and the horrid thought of being besieged by his own son in his royal city, brought him to a sudden determination: "And David said to all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for else we shall not escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword." (2 Sam. xv. 14.) David's faithful servants agreed to his proposal; and soon accordingly the whole royal family, excepting the ten concubines whom he left to take charge of the palace, were on their way from Jerusalem. The six hundred old and faithful warriors who shared with him in his former troubles under Saul, and his own guards, accompanied him, and he resolved to flee beyond Jordan into the territories of the two and a half tribes, who could not so soon have been poisoned by Absalom's treachery. Thus did David leave his royal city, walking barefoot, in sackcloth and ashes, mourning and lamenting, and the whole multitude wailing with him, and washing their steps with tears, because of the terrible misfortune that had befallen their once victorious and still illustrious monarch. Having arrived at the brook Kidron, David said to the chief priests, Zadok and Abiathar, and to the Levites who carried the Ark of the Covenant, "Carry back the Ark of God into the city: If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, Behold, here am I, let Him do to me as seemeth good to Him." (2 Sam. xv. 25, 26.) So the priests and Levites returned with the Ark to Jerusalem, and the king with the lamenting multitude passed over Kidron. When they ascended the Mount of Olives, David received information that Ahithophel, who was his chief counsellor, was also among the conspirators with Absalom, and he said, "O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." When he arrived at the top of the mountain, where he intended to pour forth his wounded soul before the Lord, Hushai, the Archite, his faithful friend, came to meet him, covered with sackcloth and ashes, and desired to go along with him; but David persuaded him that he would serve his interest better by returning to Jerusalem, and pretending friendship with Absalom; for thus he might defeat Ahithophel's counsels, which otherwise might prove very dangerous. Hushai therefore returned, and it was agreed that the two sons of the high priests should convey tidings to David of all that took place at Jerusalem.

When David and his followers arrived at a place called Bahurim, a kinsman of Saul, named Shimei, came forth and loaded him with reproaches and curses, and threw stones at him, and said, "Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial: The Lord hath returned upon thee

all the blood of the house of Saul, . . . and behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man." When the mighty men that surrounded David heard the foul and opprobrious words of Shimei, they were filled with indignation, and Abishai would have taken off his head, but David restrained him, saying, "So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so? . . . Behold, my own son . . . seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? . . . It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day. . . . So Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust." (2 Sam. xvi. 5—13.) But when they arrived near Jordan, Shimei returned, and David and the people that were with him, being very wearied, rested themselves there.

On that evening of affliction and deep distress, David composed the vii. Psalm. Its title begins with the words **שִׁיְיוֹן לְדָוִד** (Shigayon Le-David). Shigayon means, "a poem composed under great excitement, or agitation of mind," being derived from **שָׁגָה** (Shagah), "to err, to deviate, to wander, to be out of one's senses through excitement of any kind," &c. : Then follows, "which he sang unto, or before Jehovah, concerning the words of **כֹּשֵׁשׁ** (Cush)," which means "the calumniator;" as in those days the "Cushi," or the "black moor," was a proverbial name for a wicked man, for a liar and calumniator, who had pleasure in vilifying, or blackening the character of others. (Compare Jer. xiii. 23, and Amos ix. 7.) To this are added the words "the Benjamite," which compare with the above quoted words of David, "How much more may this Benjamite do it?" i.e. persecute and calumniate me, seeing my own son seeks to take my life.

PS. VII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CIII.

A Psalm composed by David under great excitement, and which he sang unto Jehovah concerning the words of the calumniator—the Benjamite.

1. O Jehovah, my God, in Thee have I taken shelter:
Save me from all my persecutors, and deliver me.
2. Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces—
O there is no other Deliverer !
3. O Jehovah my God, if I have done this,
If there be iniquity in my hands :
4. If I have rewarded evil to him who recompensed me evil for
good—
If I have plundered him who afflicted me without cause.*

* This has been a perplexing verse for commentators, and we are sorry to see that after all their long and elaborated criticisms, they have not done justice to it. We observe first, that the rendering of **שָׁלֵמִי** (Sholmi), by, "Him who was at peace with me," is false, for the word

5. Let the enemy pursue my soul, and overtake it ;
 Let him also trample my life to the ground,
 And lay mine honour in the dust, Selah, for ever.

In the curses which wicked Shimei poured forth, he accused the King of being guilty of the blood of Saul and his house, and ascribed his present misery to that cause. David, therefore, in the first part of the Psalm vindicates his innocence in the case of Saul, whose life he spared twice, although he was persecuted by him, and was rewarded by him evil for good. Such is the confidence which conscious innocence inspires, even in the sight of that God who knows all the thoughts of man. David could say, "If I have done this," *i.e.*, If I am guilty of the death of Saul and his son, as Shimei accused me; "if I have rewarded evil to him (*viz.* to Saul) who recompensed me evil for good;" if I have sought his destruction as he sought mine, though at the hazard of my life I delivered him from the hand of the Philistines—then "Let the enemy (Absalom) pursue my soul and overtake it," *i.e.*, let it be as Shimei said, that I should now die in consequence of it, and lose my kingdom as Saul lost his. But seeing that David knew that Jehovah was perfectly acquainted with his innocence in this matter, he prays in the whole succeeding part of the Psalm for speedy deliverance, and expresses his confidence in the righteous God that He would deliver him.

6. Arise, O Jehovah, in Thy wrath;
 Lift up Thyself against the fury of mine adversaries;
 And revive for me Thine appointed judgment.
 7. And let the assembly of the people surround Thee,
 And on their account return Thou on high.

Having justified himself before God, David begins to call upon Him for

is never used in this sense; nor can it be derived from שָׁלוֹם (Shalom), "peace," for then it would have been אִישׁ שְׁלוֹמִי (Ish Shelomi), "my allied friend," or "the man with whom I was at peace," as it is in Psalm xli. 9, where it is rendered "mine own familiar friend." The examples cited by the friends of this erroneous interpretation from Gen. xxiv. 21, and 2 Sam. xx. 19, are both false, for in the first instance, שְׁלֵמִים (Shelemim) is an adjective, and denotes "faithful," or "a perfect attachment." "These men are perfectly attached to us, or faithful with us," and the same it is in the latter passage, "I am of those Israelites that are perfectly faithful," or faithfully attached, *i.e.* entirely loyal—perfectly attached to King David. But the word as a noun never appears, nor ever can appear, without the *v.* It must therefore be derived from שָׁלַם (Shalam), "to pay, repay, recompense," and in this sense it is often used by David, and especially where it stands as a reward of evil made for good, as Psalm xxxv. 12, "They rewarded me evil for good;" and this also refers to the same subject, when wicked Saul and his associates, instead of being thankful to David for having defeated Goliath at the hazard of his own life, persecuted him for it. But in Psalm xxxviii. 20, the word is used in exactly the same sense as in our verse, וְאֶשְׁלַמְךָ רָעָה (Umshalmey Raah), "and they that render me evil," *i.e.* "for good," as it follows (see the whole verse, and compare also Ps. xci. 8; Isa. xxxiv. 8; Hos. ix. 7; Mic. vii. 3, &c., where it also means "retribution," "punishment or recompense.") וְאֶחָלַצְתָּ (Vaachaltza) "if I have stripped," or, "if I have plundered," &c. (see Judge xiv. 19; 2 Sam. ii. 21, where the word is used in the same sense.) Though it is oftener used in the sense in which it is rendered in the common version, the interruption which it causes is quite sufficient to show, that it must be understood in the former sense here.

judgment upon his enemies, and upon the unjust rebels. The last clause of verse 6, "and revive for me Thine appointed judgment," may have a three-fold reference; 1st, To the general dispensation of Jehovah's justice towards all men, which is appointed, or ordained, according to His unchangeable righteousness; 2d, To the judgments which he had already executed on David's enemies and wicked persecutors, as Saul and all his heathen enemies; and 3d, To the promises in the covenant made with him, that the Lord would rise in judgment against all his enemies. Verse 7. The assembly of לְאֻמִּים (Leumim), the people, or the tribes, *i.e.*, the revolted tribes of Israel, should surround God, *i.e.*, at his tribunal, to be judged for their rebellion. עֲדָת (Adath), "assembly," is often used in a bad sense to designate "a rebellious band," or a gang of wicked men (see Ps. xxii. 16, lxviii. 30, lxxxvi. 14, &c.) Inasmuch as "Adath" is feminine, the word וְעֲלֶיהָ (Vealeha) is feminine also, but meaning "On their account," *i.e.*, on account of the wicked assembly, whom to judge Thou shalt lift up Thyself, or in other words, "Thou shalt return on high," which has the same meaning as exalting Himself in judgment, with this addition, that Jehovah's returning displeased on high, indicates something terrible enough in itself. (Compare Hos. v. 15).

8. Jehovah shall judge the nations :
O Jehovah, vindicate my justice according to Thy righteousness,
And render unto me according to mine integrity.
9. Oh let the wickedness of the wicked be brought to an end ;
But do Thou establish the righteous ;
As Thou, O righteous God, triest the heart and reins.
10. To shield me, remaineth with God,
Who is the Saviour of the upright in heart.
11. God is a righteous judge, and God is angry every day.
12. If he will not repent, He will whet His sword,
He hath bent His bow and made it ready.
13. Yea, He hath made ready for him the instruments of death ;
He prepareth His arrows for the conspirators.

The word זָעֵם (Zoem) in verse 11, designates not only a being angry, but also the pronouncing a sentence in anger against the wicked. Inasmuch as Jehovah is the righteous Judge, it devolves on Him to execute the severe sentence on the wicked at any time when their wickedness is ripe for punishment. The expression, "every day," denotes that their punishment is certain and ready. Verses 12 and 13 refer to Absalom, though, as his father, David could not mention his name; "If he will not repent," *i.e.*, the rebel Absalom, "He will whet His sword," *i.e.*, Jehovah the righteous Judge of verse 11. "He prepareth His arrows for the conspirators," or rebels. The word דֹּלְקִים (Dolkim) has these meanings, though it also signifies "pursuers," and it is therefore the strongest word which David could use for designating the enkindled rebels and conspirators who then pursued him. In the two succeeding verses he refers to Saul's persecution of him, and how Saul fell into his own pit; and in the 16th, he shows that the end of the present rebel would be the same.

14. Behold, he travailed with iniquity ;
He was big with mischief, and brought forth delusion.
15. He hath digged a pit, and hollowed it deep,
But he hath fallen in the ditch which he prepared.
16. His mischief shall return upon his own head ;
And his violence shall come down upon his own pate.
17. I will give thanks to Jehovah according to His righteousness ;
And will sing praise to the name of Jehovah Most High.

While David and his men rested themselves at the river Jordan, Absalom entered Jerusalem at the head of the rebellious multitude, and the treacherous Abithophel along with him. The latter's first advice to Absalom was, to give a certain proof to Israel that his rebellion was formidable, and that he would never be reconciled again to his father, in order that the rebels might be encouraged. This was to be done by a monstrous outrage upon his father's concubines ; and thus defiling his father's couch in the sight of all Israel, they might see that a reconciliation between them was impossible. The infernal wickedness was accordingly perpetrated on the top of the royal palace, and thus was the threatening of the Lord by Nathan the prophet literally fulfilled : " Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes (*i.e.*, in thy life-time), and give them to thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun," &c. (2 Sam. xii. 11.) But this was not all : Abithophel desired of Absalom twelve thousand men, that he might immediately pursue after David before he could pass over Jordan, and thus destroy him. But we cannot at present proceed farther with the history, as two Psalms must be considered which David composed regarding Abithophel when he was made aware of the calamity he had brought on him, and of his farther iniquitous plots.

PS. LV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CIV.

To the Chief Cause of all Events.

AN ARDENT PRAYER OF DAVID, TO BE PERFORMED WITH MUSIC.

(See Title of Psalm liv. Chronologically xxix.)

1. Listen, O God, to my prayer ; and hide not Thyself from my supplication.
2. Attend to me, and answer me, when I wail in complaint, and roar ;
3. Because of the voice of the enemy—at the oppression of the wicked ;
Who cast iniquity upon me, and calumniate me furiously.
4. My heart trembled within me,
And the terrors of death have fallen upon me.

5. Fear and anguish have come within me,
And convulsive horrors have overwhelmed me.
6. Therefore I said, O that I had wings like a dove !
I would fly away, and be at rest.
7. Behold, I am now removed far away ;
I am now for lodging in the wilderness, Selah, for ever.

In this part of the Psalm, David, in his bitter complaints, describes the first fear and trembling that came upon him at Jerusalem, when he was informed of the conspiracy which had broken out at Hebron, and of the great hurry he was in to leave the city and to flee to the wilderness at Jordan. We are surprised that commentators should have overlooked the fact, that the description of the fear and trembling in verses 4 and 5 refers to what he experienced at Jerusalem when first embarrassed by the terrible tidings of the conspiracy—that verse 6 begins with the result of that fear, **וָאָמַר** (Vaomar) “Therefore I said,” *i.e.*, being thus terror-struck by these calamitous tidings, “Therefore I said, O that I had wings like a dove ! I would fly away, and be at rest,” or, to seek rest. This is expressive of the hurry in which he left the city, saying to his servants, “Arise, and let us flee make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly,” &c. (2 Sam. xv. 14.) In verse 7 therefore, he says, “Behold, I am now removed far away,” or “I am now moving far away,” as he was already at Jordan ; “I am now for lodging in the wilderness, Selah, for ever.” But was he to get the desired rest there ? No, for the two sons of the priests came in the greatest urgency and told him to make haste again, and flee over Jordan into some fenced city, because Ahithophel had advised Absalom to pursue after him with the twelve thousand men, and kill him. (2 Sam. xvii. 21.) David therefore proceeds, stating that he was not yet secure.

8. O let me make haste to provide a shelter for me,
From the tempestuous storm—from the whirlwind.
9. Confound, O Jehovah, divide their tongues,
For I have seen violence and strife in the city.
10. They compass her day and night upon her walls ;
And iniquity and mischief are in the midst of her.
11. Perversion is in the midst of her ;
And deceit and guile depart not from her streets.
12. For it was not an enemy that reproached me ;
Else I could have borne it :
It was not an adversary that lifted himself against me ;
For, from such an one I would have hidden myself.
13. But thou, a man whom I could esteem—
My familiar friend, and the man of my confidence :
14. So that we sweetly counselled together of secrets ;
Into the house of God we walked in company.
15. Let death put his claim upon them ;
Let them go down alive into hell :
For wickedness is in their dwelling, yea within them.

16. I will cry aloud unto God ; and Jehovah shall save me.
17. Evening, and morning, and noonday will I complain, and mourn ;
And He shall hear my voice.
18. He hath redeemed my soul for peace, when war was against me ;
For in multitudes were they with me.
19. God shall hear me, and answer them—
Even He that abideth from eternity, Selah for ever,
That there are no changes for them,
And that they feared not God.

When in the 8th verse the Psalmist states that even in the wilderness near Jordan there was no hiding place for him, because of the preparations that were going on in the city to pursue after him, in the 9th he prays that the Lord would confound them, and divide their tongues, as He had done to the builders of the tower of Babel, that their violence and strifes might be the means of their own confusion, and that they might be ensnared in the very mischief which they plotted upon the walls of the city and within her. After having expressed in verses 12—14 the additional grief which the infamous treachery of Abithophel, once his confidential friend and counsellor, had caused him, he returns to call for Jehovah's judgments upon the rebels in general. Verse 15. *יָשִׁי מַוֶּתְהָם עֲלֵיכֶם* (Yashi Maveth Alemo), "Let death put his claim upon them," *i.e.* let death take them off before they can execute their violent plans. (*יָשִׁי*, Yashi), is derived from *נֹשֶׁה* (Nosheh), "a creditor;" compare 2 Kings iv. 1, "And the creditor (the Nosheh) came to take away my two sons to be his bondmen;" "Let them go down alive to hell," *i.e.* like the faction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who rose against Moses in the wilderness, but who had no time left them for executing their meditated wickedness, for death immediately swallowed them up alive. In verses 16 and 17, David states that he would resort to his usual means, that is, he would cry unto the Lord, and He would surely answer him as He was wont to do. He then refers, in verse 18, to former deliverances, when Jehovah had redeemed his soul for peace, or in peace, from all the dangerous wars in which he had been engaged ; and by what means ? David answers, "For in multitudes were they with me," *i.e.* the heavenly auxiliaries that came to fight for him. Ps. xviii. is the best illustration of this verse (compare also Ps. lvi., in this book Ps. xii. 2, and exposition.) In verse 19, he states that the eternal God, who is unchangeable, would hear *his* prayers, and answer the rebels in His wrath ; that they could expect or attempt no changes in the government ; and that they had acted the part of rebels, not only against David himself, but against God, who anointed him king over Zion, His holy mountain. (Compare Ps. ii. 5, 6.) The translators have not understood the meaning of the passage, and therefore have rendered *וַיַּעֲנֵם* (Veyaanem), "and He shall afflict them ;" but it means, as the word always signifies, "and He shall answer them." But to make the verse clearer, we must transpose the Selah, clause, and read it thus, "God, even He that abideth from eternity, Selah to eternity, shall hear me, and answer them that there are no changes for them, and that they feared not God ;" *i.e.* that they acted like rebels against God's decree, and

therefore must bear the consequences. David then proceeds farther to describe Ahithophel's treachery, his own confidence in God, and the destruction of his enemies.

20. He put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him; he hath violated his covenant.
21. Smoother than butter was his speech when war was in his heart: Softer seemed his words than oil, when they were drawn swords.
22. Cast thy burden upon Jehovah, and He shall support thee: He will never suffer the righteous to be moved.
23. But Thou, O God, shalt bring those down into the pit of destruction—
 Bloody and deceitful men shall not finish half their days.
 But as for me, I will trust in Thee.

In connection with the above Psalm there is another, the primary reference of which is to Ahithophel; but the apostle Peter assures us (Acts i. 20), that its predictions of the terrible doom of a wicked persecutor and betrayer, upon whose head an ocean of the most dreadful curses is poured, have also direct reference to Judas the betrayer of the Messiah. The reader who has paid careful attention to the historical chain by which all the Messianic Psalms are connected with branches of David's history, will see that the peculiarity of these Psalms depends entirely on the peculiarity of the circumstances into which David was mysteriously brought, in order that he should be enabled, even naturally as it were, to speak of Messiah in himself as his last and spiritual royal descendant and everlasting heir to his throne, and will be able easily to comprehend the subject and object of this Psalm. We have frequently stated that in the Messianic predictions in the Psalms, we must always keep our eye upon the King referred to in the covenant which was made with David, whose throne was to be established for ever before Jehovah. We must ever remember that a *sceptre*, and not *sceptres*, was to be established from out of the tribe of Judah—that an everlasting *throne*, and not *thrones*, was promised to David in the covenant—that all this began temporally with him, and ended spiritually with Emmanuel, in whom it continues for ever—and that, therefore, we often find the Messiah called David; “And my servant David shall be king over them,” (Ezek. xxxvii. 24); “Even my servant David, he shall feed them,” (xxxiv. 23): Israel shall return in the latter days, “And seek Jehovah their God, and David their king,” (Hos. iii. 5.) All this shows that the eternal king of David's covenant is referred to; and the second Psalm is a standing monument of the fact, that David's kingdom was identified with the everlasting kingdom of Emmanuel on his throne.

Now, let us consider the circumstances in which David was, when he composed Ps. cix., and compare them with those of Emmanuel when he exclaimed, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” David, like his Son Jesus, was rejected by the people of Israel as a nation, while but a few comparatively remained faithful to him. Among these few were especially the six hundred men who shared his lot during his former persecutions under Saul. The rebellious nation would be satisfied with nothing less than his blood. The rebels were guided by Ahithophel, who had formerly been his familiar friend and counsellor, but who now undertook before

all the other rebels to pursue after David, and deliver him into the hand of the destroyers. And now, let the reader compare all this with the circumstances of Jesus, and see how striking the parallel between them is in every particular. When, therefore, was David in circumstances more suitable than those in which he now was, for composing an oracle of this kind, in which the doom of Messiah's betrayer, Judas, in particular, and that of the enemies of His Church in general, could be so literally foretold? In the fact, that the end of Abithophel and Judas was exactly the same—that both betrayers of the king of the covenant hanged themselves, before their wicked and infernal designs could be executed, we have the best illustration of our Psalm. Not only does Peter affirm that this Psalm was written concerning Judas, but if we remember that Jesus said, in that terrible night in which he was betrayed, "Woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born"—we cannot but see that it was, as if He had said, O let that betrayer read Psalm cix., and see there his doom! We need not farther enlarge here on the false feelings indulged in by some who object against the imprecations contained in this oracle, as we have treated the subject at length in the Introduction, see pp. 19—23. We would only add a few words regarding the oft-expressed opinion, that this Psalm is contrary to the command of Jesus to pray for our enemies, and antagonistic to that spirit in which He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." O how blind are such not to see, that this objection speaks against themselves, for the same holy and benevolent Jesus pronounced woe upon woe against the enemies of God, and poured the damnation of hell, and vengeance, for all the righteous blood shed, upon their heads. Jehovah is a consuming fire; and as sure as in His pity and Divine compassion, He gave His only begotten Son to be pierced for those that should come to Him by faith, so sure is it, that for incorrigible and finally impenitent rebels, everlasting destruction in hell-fire, with the devil and his angels, is prepared. This is the truth of God, let amiable but false feeling be shocked by it as it may. Our Psalm gives forth the doom of every Judas, in whatever age or generation, who betrays the Lamb of God, and fights against Jehovah and His kingdom.

PS. CIX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CV.

To the Chief Cause of all Events.

A SONG OF PRAISE BY DAVID.*

1. O Thou God of my praise, keep not silence;

* The title of this Psalm shows distinctly, that it was intended for the temple service; and it is a "Mizmer," a song of praise, as Jehovah is praised in the destruction of the enemies of Christ and His Church, as in the salvation of believers. Besides the general reference of the Psalm to David and Christ, Abithophel and Judas, it may also serve to every child of God for comfort and consolation against the powers of darkness, and to the rebel as a sharp dagger, a foretaste of his future doom, if he willfully remains what he is. Comp. Rev. xvi. 1—7 and xviii. 20.

2. For the mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitful,
Are opened against me :
They have spoken against me with a lying tongue.
3. With hateful speeches have they surrounded me ;
And without provocation they fight against me.
4. For my love they calumniate me, even when I pray.
5. And they reward me evil for good, and hatred for my love.
6. Set Thou the wicked one over him ;
And let Satan stand at his right hand.
7. When he is judged, he shall be found guilty,
And his prayer shall become sin.
8. His days shall be few—his office shall another take.
9. His children shall be fatherless, and his wife a widow :
10. And vagabonds and beggars shall his children be :
And they shall search out of their ruins.
11. His extortioner shall seize on all that he hath ;
And strangers shall plunder his labour.
12. Let there be none to extend mercy to him ;
Nor any one to show compassion to his orphans.
13. His posterity shall be destined to extirpation ;
That in the following generation their names be blotted out.
14. The iniquity of his fathers shall be remembered by Jehovah :
And the sin of his mother shall not be blotted out ;
15. But shall be perpetually before Jehovah,
That He may cut off their memory from the earth.
16. Because he remembered not to execute mercy ;
But persecuted the poor and needy one,
And the broken-hearted, even unto death.
17. As he loved a curse, so it came upon him :
As he desired not a blessing, so it is removed from him.
18. As he clothed himself with a curse as with his garments,
So it diffused within him like water, and like oil into his bones.
19. Be it to him as a garment to cover himself,
And as a girdle, wherewith he be continually girded.
20. Such is the reward of my calumniators from Jehovah ;
And of those who speak evil against my soul.
21. But Thou art Jehovah my Lord ;
Deal Thou with me according to Thy name :
Seeing Thy mercy is abundant, O deliver Thou me.
22. For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.
23. I run off, like a declining shadow ;
For I was driven by terror like the locust.
24. My knees are shaking under me through fasting ;
And my flesh faileth for want of fat.
25. And thus am I become a reproach to them,
That when they see me, they shake their heads.
26. Help me, O Jehovah, my God :
Save me, according to Thy tender mercy.
27. That they may perceive that this is Thy hand—

- That Thou, Jehovah, hast done it.
28. Let them curse ; but Thou wilt bless :
They rose up, but shall be ashamed, when Thy servant shall rejoice.
 29. My calumniators shall be clothed with confusion :
And clothe themselves with their shame as with a mantle.
 30. I will praise Jehovah exceedingly with my mouth,
And among the multitudes will I adore Him.
 31. For He standeth at the right hand of the destitute man,
To save him from those who condemn his soul.*

When David was informed by the two sons of the High Priests of the counsels which were held at Jerusalem, and of what Ahithophel had advised, he made all his followers haste to cross the Jordan. They met with a very friendly reception when they came into Gilead, for not only were the gates of Mahanaim, the strongest fortified city, opened to them, but the great men of Gilead provided them richly in all things as long as they were there. (2 Sam. xvii. 27—29.) That David spent several weeks in this place before the civil war broke openly out, we may learn from the very nature of Hushai's advice to Absalom, which the latter adopted, and which was to the effect that he should not wage war until all Israel were gathered to him, from Dan to Beersheba ; which would necessarily take a considerable time to accomplish. But we shall see this also from the Psalms which he composed while residing there, and the first series of which are evidently the iii., iv., v., and vi. The relation of these Psalms to each other from their set times of composition, is somewhat remarkable ; for from the 5th verse of the iii. we learn, that it was composed in the morning—from verse 8 of the iv., that it was composed in the evening—from verse 3 of the v., that it was composed in the morning again, while the vi. seems, especially from the 6th verse, to have been composed during the night.†

PS. III. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CVI.

A SONG OF PRAISE, COMPOSED BY DAVID WHEN HE FLED FROM ABSALOM HIS SON.

1. O Jehovah, how numerous are my adversaries!
Many are they that rise up against me.
2. Many are they who say concerning my soul,
There is no salvation for him in God, Selah, continually.

* What is strikingly noticeable in this Psalm is, that the singular number is used from the 6th to the 10th verse, while in the former and latter parts the Psalmist speaks of many enemies and persecutors—a fact which shows distinctly that the Holy Spirit intended here to point to the special doom of one individual, and Ahithophel was to David what Judas was to Christ, and both reaped in a terrible manner the first fruits of that dreadful judgment. David was soon informed that Ahithophel had hanged himself because his counsel was put to nought through the overruling providence of God, and he must have seen in it a token of his deliverance, but surely he must have looked forward to the second Ahithophel, and to the deliverance of the great David.

† For this thought I am indebted to the Rev. David Smith, D.D., Biggar, and have pleasure in making this acknowledgment.

The word *Selah* often changes its influence along with the sentiment after which it is placed, and it does so here. Indeed, according to the Hebrew etymology, it may refer to the first clause of verse 2, viz., that many say continually regarding his soul, &c., as well as to the second, in which latter case it must mean that those wicked men of whom David speaks, said concerning his soul, that his salvation, as well as his temporal deliverance, would not continually be granted him of God—that though God had formerly showed him great kindness, and vouchsafed him many wonderful deliverances, He would do so no longer. That such had been the case we may learn from the language which cursing Shimei used, that all David's present misery was sent upon him by God, on account of his guilt, and that God would now cast him off altogether. But David was not the man to be thus easily cast into despair by the assertions of wicked men, he therefore says :

3. But thou, O Jehovah, art a Shield about me—
My Glory, and He who exalted my head.
4. I cried unto Jehovah with my voice,
And He answered me from His holy mountain, *Selah*, always.

Here is David's conviction—he had often proved its truth—he had often cried to Jehovah for help, and He had answered him “from His holy mountain,” viz., from Zion where His glory rested. From the latter expression we see, that David here refers to his wars against the heathen nations, when the ark had already been erected on Zion, and whence Jehovah did send help to him against the mighty armies of his enemies ; and did also answer his prayer regarding Ahithophel (2 Sam. xv. 31); and this gives him courage and confidence to say further :

5. I laid me down and slept ; I also awaked :
For Jehovah sustained me.
6. I will not be afraid of the ten thousands of the people,
Who round about have set themselves against me.
7. Arise, O Jehovah ; save me, O my God :
For Thou hast smitten all mine enemies on the cheek-bone ;
Thou hast broken the teeth of the wicked.
8. Salvation belongeth unto Jehovah :
On Thy people it devolveth to bless Thee, *Selah*, for ever.

David had the first indication of the continuance of Jehovah's goodness to him in the fact, that Ahithophel's counsel was overturned in answer to his prayer, “O Lord, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.” And he was now in a fenced city, where he lay down and rested, and was refreshed in body and soul ; and though the onset of Absalom's rebellious host was expected, he expresses in the 6th verse his fearlessness in the prospect of it, and assigns the ground thereof in the 7th, viz., that former experience taught him, that if Jehovah was for him, no army, however strong, could stand against him. The last verse contrasts with the 2d, where his wicked enemies denied him salvation ; but, says he, this is not in their hands either to give or deny : לַיהוָה הַיְשׁוּעָה (La-

Jehovah Hyeshuah), "Salvation belongeth unto Jehovah," or "Jehovah's is salvation," *i.e.*, it doth not belong to capricious, changeable man; it is in Jehovah's hands. He then turns to the blessed consequences of salvation, which are the praises which the saved people of God render when they are delivered; "On thy people," *i.e.*, thy delivered, "it devolveth," it lies on them as a holy duty, "to bless Thee, Selah, for ever." The word בִּרְכָתְךָ (Birchathecha) here does not mean "thy blessing," *i.e.*, His blessing on His people, but it means, "to bless Thee," the duty of blessing Thee for deliverance and salvation (compare a similar passage in Ps. lvi., chronologically xii. 12, and exposition, &c.)

PS. IV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CVII.

"To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A SONG OF DAVID, TO BE PERFORMED WITH MUSIC.

1. When I call, answer me, O God, my Deliverer :
When I was in distress hast Thou enlarged me :
Be gracious unto me, and hear my prayer.
2. O ye sons of men, how long will ye cherish the vain desire,
To put my glory to shame ?
Will you search for falsehood, Selah, continually ?

In the first verse David builds hope upon his former experience, and calls upon Jehovah to hear his prayer and answer him, as He was wont to enlarge him in time of distress. (For צִדְקִי (Tzidki,) which we render here "My Deliverer," see foot-note on Ps. lxxv., in this book Ps. lx. 5.) The connection of verse 2 has been usually misunderstood; for the expression, "How long will ye love vanity?" or, as we have rendered it, "will ye cherish a vain desire?" stands closely connected with the preceding clause; for the vain desire they cherished was to overthrow David's dominion, and put his glory to shame. The Psalmist, therefore, proceeds to show them how vain and foolish their attempts were.

3. But know ye, that Jehovah hath elected the godly one for himself—
That Jehovah will hear when I cry unto him.
4. Stand in awe, therefore, and keep yourselves from sin :
Commune with your own heart upon your couches,
And be silent, Selah, always.

The word הִפְלִיחַ (Hiphlah,) in verse 3, denotes the choice of anything, by preferring it above everything else. David was distinguished from the whole multitude of Israel, and chosen and set apart as King, and hence it follows that Jehovah would answer him, and punish severely any attempt at rebellion against him. (Compare Ps. ii. 6.) Some would render רִגְזוּ (Rigzu) in verse 4, "Be angry," but the word is comprehensive enough to express the standing in awe, and submitting to a higher power, though

against their inclination. He tells them that though they may be displeased with Jehovah's arrangements, still they must tremble at the thought of rising against the Omnipotent, that they should calmly and quietly deliberate over the matter before they openly rebel against their God. He then solemnly admonishes them to submit and remain silent. (Compare Ps. ii. 12.)

5. Offer sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in Jehovah.
6. There are many that say, "Who will show us what is good?"
Lift up on us the light of Thy countenance, O Jehovah!
7. Thou hast put gladness into my heart,
More than in the time when their corn and wine increased.
8. In peace will I at once lay me down and sleep,
When Thou, O Jehovah, Thou alone,
Shalt make me dwell in security.

The import of verse 5 is this—render perfect obedience to Jehovah and His will, which is the best sacrifice, and without which, sacrifices in themselves are an abhorrence to Him. In verse 6 the Psalmist says, that there were many who said, "Who will show us what is good?" *i.e.* how shall we know that it is the Lord's appointment that David must remain King on the throne? is it not a fiction of his own wherewith to intimidate us? David therefore prays the Lord to give him a new manifestation of His favour by sending him a speedy deliverance, in order that they may be thereby shown what His will and appointments are. Such signs of Divine favour, says he in verse 7, have often caused more gladness to his heart than a rich temporal harvest, when the joy of the people was great (compare Isai. ix. 2, 3.) The result of Jehovah's lifting up the light of His countenance on His people, is *peace*, both temporal and spiritual (see Num. vi. 25, 26.) Hence David closes by stating that, instead of lying in anguish on his bed, as at present, and sorrow and grief preventing his sleep; when Jehovah would lift up on him the light of His countenance, and grant him peace, then would he at once lie down and sleep, under His almighty protection.

The next Psalm was composed by David in a morning walk. It has in its title **אֵל הַחִילּוֹת** (El Hanchiloth), which means, that the Psalm was composed near, at, or by the streams, *i.e.* Jordan and Jabbok. Mahanaim lay beyond Jordan, on the north bank of the river Jabbok. When, after a restless night, he walked in the morning between these rivers, he composed the following song, and marked the occasion of its composition in the superscription.

PS. V. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CVIII.

"To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A SONG OF DAVID, COMPOSED AT THE STREAMS.

1. Listen, O Jehovah, to my words; regard my complaint.

2. Attend to the voice of my wailing, O my King, and my God ;
For it is unto Thee that I direct my prayers.
3. O Jehovah, this morning shalt thou hear my voice—
This morning do I present my petition to Thee ; and I will
eagerly wait.*
4. For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness ;
Evil cannot sojourn with Thee.
5. The proud ones shall not stand before Thine eyes :
Thou hatest all the workers of iniquity.
6. Thou shalt destroy those who speak falsehood :
Jehovah abhorreth the bloody and deceitful man.
7. But I, in Thy abundant mercy, shall come into Thy house ;
I shall worship, in Thy fear, towards Thy holy temple.
8. O Jehovah, lead me in Thy righteousness ;
Because of them that watch me :
Make Thy ways straight before my face.
9. Behold, there is no uprightness in their mouth ;
Perversion is their inward part ;
Their throat is an open sepulchre ; they flatter with their
tongue.
10. Pronounce them guilty, O God ; let them fall by their own
counsels ;†
For the multitude of their transgressions cast them off :
Because they have rebelled against Thee.
11. But let all those rejoice that put their trust in Thee :
Let them exult for joy ; and O do Thou defend them :
Let those also triumph who love Thy name.
12. For Thou, O Jehovah, dost bless the righteous :
As with a shield, so with favour dost Thou compass him.

The next Psalm seems to have been composed on a bed of sickness, the effect of agitation, misery, and grief, as internal evidence will show. There are other two which obviously belong to the same period, and which we shall introduce next in order. The title of the following one reads (Lamnatzeach), To the Chief Cause of all Events (Binginoth al Hash-minith), to be performed with music, by an eighth division of the Levitical bands, which was a third of the whole, as they were divided into twenty-four wards (compare title of Ps. xii., in this book xxiii.) Then follows (Mizmer Le David) a Song or Psalm of David.

* The last word of this verse וְאֶצְפֶּנֶה (Vantzapeh), means, "and I will eagerly watch, or look out, or anxiously wait," *i.e.* for an answer to the prayer offered to God. (Comp. Hab. ii. 1; Micah vii. 7.)

† יִפְּלוּ מִמְּצִלֹתֵיהֶם (Yiplu Mimotzothem), literally, "Let them fall from their counsels ;" meaning, Let them come short of their contrivances—let them not gain the desired end of their wicked devices. In the other part of the verse the idea is, that because of their rebellion against God, all their former transgressions would be brought up, and on both conjoined, their sentence pronounced.

PS. VI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CIX.

1. O Jehovah, rebuke me not in Thine anger ;
And chasten me not in Thy hot displeasure.
2. Be gracious to me, O Jehovah, for I am faint :
Heal me, O Jehovah, for my bones are struck with terror.
3. Even my soul is exceedingly agitated :
But Thou, O Jehovah, how long ? . . .
4. Return, O Jehovah ; deliver my soul :
O save me for Thy mercy's sake.
5. For in death there is no remembrance of Thee :
In the grave, who shall render Thee praise ?
6. I am wearied out because of my groaning :
I am tossed violently the whole night on my bed :
With my tears do I wet my couch.
7. Mine eye is consumed because of grief :
I waxed old because of all my adversaries.
8. Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity ;
For Jehovah hath heard the voice of my weeping :
9. Jehovah hath heard my supplication ;
Jehovah will accept my prayer.
10. All mine enemies shall be ashamed and sore terrified :
They shall retreat, and suddenly be put to shame.

Many and precious are the applications which Christians are warranted, yea, called upon, to make of this lively fountain of healing balm. There can be no distress too great—no suffering too severe—no wound too deep—and no heart too broken, not to find in this Psalm a healing leaf perfectly adapted to soothe affliction in whatever stage, and of whatever nature. The very fact that it is an inspired Oracle, and was intended for temple service, shows, that it was designed for the children of God under suffering ; and as such, it is certain that even the soldier of Christ will find in it sufficient provision for his journey, and fit weapons to fight with and overcome the Prince of darkness and the King of terrors. The most wonderful features are in this Psalm the depth of misery into which the Psalmist gradually plunges in his complaints in the first part of it,—the sudden grasp at the Arm of mercy and Omnipotence, that is made in verse 8—and the extreme height of comfort and consolation that it reaches in the end. But contemplating it with respect to the chronological relation, we cannot but discover on the very surface of it, that David composed it on the bed of severe affliction originating in his corporeal and mental agitation at that miserable period. The reader may compare this Psalm with the praise of Hezekiah after his illness, and see that several expressions in it are taken from this Psalm. But, in addition to bodily suffering, we also discover in it acute mental anguish, arising from the bitter reflection, that all these afflictions had come upon him on account of his sin. This twofold agonizing grief pervades the Psalm down to the 8th verse ; but there a radiant light suddenly lodged in his afflicted soul, and the most humble and touching supplication issues in confidence and triumph. The reader will find ex-

pository remarks on various expressions in this Psalm in others of a like description treated of in the previous pages, in which similar expressions occur. As the Psalms which David composed during the period of his persecution by Saul are marked by alternate hope and fear, by seasons of light and darkness, by strong consolation and grievous wailing—so those which he wrote at this period are similarly characterized, as we shall now see.

PS. XXXVIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CX.

A PSALM OF DAVID TO BE KEPT IN MEMORY.*

1. O Jehovah, rebuke me not in Thine anger :
And chasten me not in Thy hot displeasure.
2. For Thine arrows have sunk deep into me,
And Thy hand doth press hard upon me.
3. There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thy wrath :
There is no peace in my bones, by reason of my sin.
4. For mine iniquities have gone over my head ;
As a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.
5. My wounds became loathsome and putrified, because of my folly.
6. I am distorted ; I am exceedingly bowed down :
I go about mourning all the day long.
7. For my loins are filled with a parching heat ;
And there is no soundness in my flesh.
8. I am enfeebled and exceedingly crushed :
I roared because of the violent commotions of my heart.
9. O Lord, all my desire is before Thee ;
And my groaning is not hid from Thee.
10. My heart palpiteth ; my strength hath forsaken me :
And even the very light of mine eyes is no more with me.
11. My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my plague,
And my relations do stand afar off.
12. And they who seek after my soul lay snares for me ;
And they who devise my hurt, speak mischievous things,
And meditate on deceits all day long.
13. But I am as a deaf man, that heareth not ;
And as a dumb man, that openeth not his mouth.
14. Yea, I became like a man that heareth not,
And in whose mouth there are no arguments.

* For an explanation of this title the reader is referred to the preface to Psalm lxx., in this book Ps. xcix., the title of which is exactly similar. We have only to add here that our Psalm, according to its title, was composed by David, to remind him of his sin, and to humble him because of it, as well as to remind God of His mercy and pardoning love; and for this purpose it was left to succeeding generations to be made profitable use of in time of trouble. The reader is requested to compare the first verse of this Psalm with that of the preceding in this book, and he will be satisfied of the correctness of our statement, that they are related to each other by time and circumstances, and that both were composed when David was suffering severely from the agitation and grief he endured at that time, although his greatest misery arose from the remembrance that his sin was the cause of it all.

15. For on Thee, O Jehovah, do I wait :
Thou wilt answer me, O my Lord, and my God.
16. For I said, Lest they should rejoice over me—
Lest they prevail against me, should my foot slip.
17. For I am exposed to halting,
Because my wound is before me continually.
18. For I must confess mine iniquity, and am grieved for my sin.
19. And my enemies live, and are mighty ;
And they are numerous who hate me wrongfully.
20. Those also who requite me evil for good,
Calumniate me, because I follow after what is good.
21. Abandon me not, O Jehovah, my God :
Remove not to a distance from me.
22. Make haste to help me, O Lord of my salvation.

While the two preceding Psalms were composed on the bed of sickness, wherein the temporally and spiritually afflicted King poured forth his bitter complaints into the bosom of the God of his former mercies, the following one, which is the xli. in the common order, seems to have been written after the Lord had heard and answered his supplication, and restored his body, and quickened his downcast soul. In it David describes the faithfulness of God, and how He rewards those who attend to the poor, and visit and comfort them in their affliction—how He had rewarded him for such compassionate deeds, and healed and comforted him, and raised him up again. After describing the wickedness and malignity of his enemies in their triumphing over him, and impatiently waiting for his death, and grounding their wicked expectations on the idea that the Lord had forsaken him on account of his sin, David rises to hope and confidence in Jehovah his God.

PS. XLI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXI.

“To the Chief Cause of all Events.”

A SONG OF PRAISE BY DAVID.

1. Happy is he who attendeth carefully to the afflicted :
Him will Jehovah deliver in the day of distress.
2. Jehovah will guard him and preserve his life :
He will be praised in the land :
And Thou wilt not give him over to the will of his enemies.
3. Jehovah will support him on the bed of languishing :
All his couch didst Thou change during his illness.*

* While in these verses David gives the result of his experience, and tells how Jehovah will show compassion to the compassionate, and support those in their sickness who supported their neighbours when they suffered, he at the same time adduces the proofs for this assertion in verses 2 and 3, viz., what he had himself experienced. The LXX. have overlooked this

4. I have said, O Jehovah, be gracious unto me :
Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.
5. Mine enemies spake evil against me :
"When shall he die, and his name perish?"
6. And when he cometh to see me, he speaketh deceitfully ;
His heart collecteth iniquity for himself ;
Of which he talketh when he goeth abroad.*
7. All that hate me whisper together against me :
They form devices against me, even to my hurt.
8. "The wicked deed is now poured upon him :
And now that he lieth, he shall not rise again."
9. Even my familiar friend in whom I confided,
Who ate my bread, lifted up his heel against me.†
10. But Thou, O Jehovah, be gracious unto me,
And raise me up, and I shall reward them.
11. By this I know that Thou hast delight in me,
Because mine enemy was not permitted to triumph over me.
12. As for me, Thou hast supported me in mine integrity,
And hast appointed me to stand ever before Thee.
13. Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel,
From eternity to eternity : Amen and Amen.

fact, and therefore have rendered *לֹא יִתְּנֶהוּ* (Veal Tinnenu) in the 2d verse by *μη παραδω* "he will not deliver him," in the third person. So the common version, and commentators following it, commit the same mistake in verse 3, by rendering *הִפְּתֵךְ* (Haphchta), "Thou wilt make," instead "Thou hast made," or, as it really signifies, "Thou didst change, or turn." David, in these two expressions, alludes to his recent experience : being a compassionate man to others in affliction (see Ps. xxxv., in this book xxx. 13, 14), the Lord was gracious to him in his illness—He gave him not over to the will, or wish, of his enemies, *i.e.*, He had not fulfilled their wicked desire that he should die—He supported and sustained him on the bed of languishing, *i.e.*, He comforted and supported him by His grace temporally and spiritually. All his couch He changed during his illness. This verse is figurative of a faithful and attentive sick-nurse, who supports the patient with the one hand, and arranges and puts the couch in order with the other, that the patient may get comfortable repose.

* In this verse David describes the wickedness and falsehood of his enemies, in that though some came to see him, it was out of malice; for while they spake words of friendship in his presence, they invented false stories, and spread them abroad. In verse 7 the enemies are again spoken of in the plural, and represented as whispering together against him. The substance of their whisperings is given in verse 8; they said, "The wicked deed," or, "the deed of Belial," *i.e.*, the sin in the matter of Uriah is now poured upon him; hence they concluded that the Lord had put him down never to rise again.

† There can be little doubt, that in this verse David primarily refers to Abithophel, not as if he was still among his living enemies, for he was dead by that time; but speaking of his enemies in general, he alludes to the most malignant and outrageous one, and who had the least reason for being so. We have often referred to the "King of the covenant," for Messianic allusions run throughout these Psalms; because what happened to David, the temporal King thereof, happened also to Christ, the spiritual. He too had such bitter enemies, who triumphed when they saw him laid down, and wished He would never rise again, and one enemy in particular betrayed Him. He testifieth that this prophecy referred to Him (see John xiii. 18), although He left out the clause "in whom I confided," which could refer only to David his father, and not to Him, for He knew from the very first that Judas would betray Him. Jesus, therefore, could not say regarding Judas, as David said regarding Abithophel in Psalm lv., chronologically civ. 12—14. But the prophecy was perfectly fulfilled in Him. This is another example of what we have often showed, that even one verse may have reference both to David and the Messiah, because the King of the covenant was one—the throne one—Judah's sceptre one—the promised royal house one, beginning with David, the first and temporal King of the covenant, and ending with Jesus, his Descendant, in whom the temporal passed into the spiritual and everlasting.

The Psalmist was now restored from severe illness to health and vigour ; and according to the law, yea, according to the desire of his own soul, he should have entered Jehovah's sanctuary with thank-offerings, and acknowledged before the congregation the Divine mercy and faithfulness. But he remembers that he had sent back the Levites with the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, which was now filled with rebels and malefactors, and that he was beyond Jordan, an exile from his throne, and from the tabernacle and altar. What his feelings were in consequence of being denied this high privilege so dear to him, we shall learn in the three following Psalms, which, in the common order, are the xlii. and xliii. (which are but one), and the lxxxiv.

PS. XLII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXII.

“To the Chief Cause of all Events.”

AN ARDENT SUPPLICATION, TO BE SUNG BY THE SONS OF KORAH.

1. As a hart panteth after the water-brooks,
So panteth my soul after Thee, O God.
2. My soul thirsteth for God—for the living God :
O when shall I come and appear before the presence of God ?
3. My tears have become my food by day and by night,
Because they say unto me daily, “Where is thy God ?”
4. These events I remember, and I pour out my soul within me :
When I went before the multitude ;
When I made them leap unto the house of God,
With the voice of triumphant song and praise—
With the solemnity of a festive tumult.
5. Why art thou cast down, O my soul ?—
Why art thou disquieted within me ?
Wait patiently for God : for I shall yet confess to Him—
The salvation of His countenance.

The son of Jesse was once more an exile, and deprived of the privileges so dear to his soul—he feels once more a panting desire after the Presence of God in the Ark, Cherubim, and Shechinah, as he felt in the wilderness of Judea in former days, when he was persecuted by Saul (see Ps. lxi., in this book xxviii., and exposition.) But his situation was far more lamentable now than then, and his wounds far deeper, arising from the entirely different circumstances under which he was now driven into misery. Within our present limits, however, we can only make a few remarks in illustration of this point: 1st, Though he was then already anointed king by Samuel, yet he had come only from obscurity into light, and suffered only as a private individual ; 2d, The tyrant who persecuted him was an entire stranger to him ; 3d, He had then only the prospect of enjoying the privileges of Jehovah's sanctuary, in common with every other individual Israelite. How utterly different were his circumstances now ? He who was a mighty monarch, and the dread of all the kings of the east, was

driven from his throne into exile—and by whom? by his own child and subjects, whom he had lifted from misery, and raised above their enemies. But the thought also was very afflicting to him, that he was that David who had conquered Zion, and built it up in magnificent beauty and splendour—had erected there a tabernacle for the Ark of God—had brought it up from Kirjath-Jearim with shouts and triumphant songs, and had put celestial strains of adoration and praise into the mouth of the Levitical bands to magnify Jehovah day and night in his temple. That David was now a poor persecuted exile beyond Jordan; and who but he could say, “As a hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God?” His large and devoted soul panted and fainted for the holy, glorious, and mysterious Presence of the living God, the theme of his praise and adoration. But the sharpest arrow in his soul was the reproach of his enemies, who denied him any part in his God, for which reason he washed his face with tears even at meat, and mourned day and night. In verse 4 he gives full scope to his grief, and exclaims, “These events I remember, and I pour out my soul within me;” and what were these events, which pierced his soul above all other things? They were the remembrance of that holy joy and solemnity with which he brought the Ark to Zion, when he sung, played, and danced before it at the head of the rejoicing multitude, who leaped in exultation and holy devotional triumph, until they came to the house of the God of Jacob. Thus when David says that some events were remembered by him, which made him pour out his soul within him, he tells us what they were. “I remember **כִּי אָעֵבֶר בַּסּוֹךְ** (Ki Eeevor Basoch)

when I went, or marched, before the multitude (the noun **עֵבֶר** (Avor) implies always, not only “going,” but a going before, marching in the front, as he then did before the rejoicing multitude); **אֶדָדֶם** (Edadem)

I made them leap, or, I caused them to dance until (we came to) the house of God, with the voice of triumphant song of praise—with the solemnity of a festive tumult.” The word “Edadem,” derived from **דָּדָה** (Dadah), has been quite misunderstood by lexicographers, by whom commentators have been led astray, for they erroneously render it, “to go slowly,” whereas it means, “to leap like a bird.” In the only place where it occurs again, Is. xxxviii. 15, it should be rendered, “Shall I leap over all my years in the bitterness of my soul?” (while the other renderings are all absurd.)

But as is usually the case with the devoted Psalmist, that from the deepest dejection he suddenly soars to the highest elevation, so here, after having stated that he was ready to pour out his soul within him, he soon remembers who was his God, and he says to his soul, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul?” why dost thou melt?—why mourn in despair?—is the great Jehovah changed?—are his compassions shut up? “Wait patiently for God; for I shall yet acknowledge, or confess, to Him the salvation of His countenance.” Once I cried to Him in the wilderness of Judea, when I likewise longed after His Presence in my exile, and He heard, and delivered, and exalted me, and enabled me to confess and praise His mercy in the great congregation. He is the same God; He will save me again, and I will confess, praise, sing, and adore with triumphant joy.

6. O my God, my soul is cast down within me :

Therefore do I remember Thee from the land of Jordan,

- And the regions of Hermon, even from this little hill.
7. Flood tumultuously poureth into flood
With the noise of thy subterranean torrents :
So all thy breakers, and thy billows, have gone over me.*
 8. O may Jehovah command His tender mercy
To stay with me by day, and His song by night ;
This is my prayer to the God of my life.
 9. I will say to God, O my Rock, Why dost Thou forget me ?
Why go I mourning because of the enemy's oppression ?
 10. As mortification to my bones is to me the reproach of the enemies,
When they continually say to me, " Where is thy God ?"
 11. Why art thou cast down, O my soul ?—
Why art thou disquieted within me ?
Wait patiently for God, for I shall yet praise Him,
As the salvation of my countenance, and my God.

PS. XLIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXIII.

1. Interpose for me, O God, and plead my cause,
Against an ungodly nation :
Deliver me from the man of deceit and unrighteousness.
2. Since Thou art the God of my strength ; Why hast Thou cast me off ?
Why go I mourning because of the enemy's oppression ?
3. O send forth Thy light and Thy truth, that they may lead me ;
And bring me to Thy holy mountain, and to Thy dwellings.
4. Then will I come to the altar of God—to God my happy joy :
And I will praise Thee upon the harp, O God, my God.
5. Why art thou cast down, O my soul ?—
Why art thou disquieted within me ?

* David, when composing this pathetic and magnificent song, stood on a little hill, whence he observed and heard the noisy and tumultuous current of the Jabbok, which, after passing several times underground, comes rushing furiously amidst the rocks, and on approaching the Jordan, it runs through a deep ravine, the cliffs on each side of which are rated by travellers to be 500 feet in perpendicular height. It is therefore with prodigious noise that the Jabbok empties itself into Jordan. The word קֹרֶחַ (Koreh), means here a tumultuous meeting, as it is often used to signify a meeting in the tumult of war—one army dashing against the other. (See Josh. viii. 14; Judg. vii. 24; 1 Sam. iv. 1; Job xxix. 21.) That תְּהוֹמֹת (Tehom), is applied not only to the depth of the sea or ocean, but also to any volume of water, of a stream or brook, see Deut. viii. 7. תִּזְנוֹר (Tzinor), means a stream that flows underground either by nature or artificially, as a canal or conduit under ground to lead water into a city. In the latter sense it is used 2 Sam. v. 8.

The import of the figure is the following: David says in verse 6, that because his soul was downcast within him, therefore he does remember God (i.e. call upon him by supplications), even from the land of Jordan (where he then was), and from the regions of Hermon (the land beyond Jordan was also called the country of Hermon, after the famous mountain of that name), yea, even from this little hill, i.e. where he then stood. He then considers the rage with which the stream Jabbok comes forth from its subterranean ravines, and pours itself with tumultuous noise into Jordan, and he remembers that these raging billows of misery and calamity rushed likewise upon him from a place as it were underground, unexpected, and unforeseen, and dashed against him with great tumult and fury.

Wait patiently for God, for I shall yet praise Him,
As the salvation of my countenance, and my God.

PS. LXXXIV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXIV.

“To the Chief Cause of all Events.”

A Song to be performed by the sons of Korah upon the harp called
Gittith (see title of Ps. viii. Chron. Ps. v.)

1. How amiable are Thy dwellings, O Jehovah Zebaoth !
2. My soul longeth, yea, fainteth for Jehovah's courts ;
That my heart and flesh might chaunt for joy to the living God.
3. Even the bird hath found a house, and the dove a nest for herself,
Wherein to rear their young ones for Thine altar ;
O my King and my God.
4. Happy are they who dwell in Thy house,
They shall continue to praise Thee, Selah, for ever.

The Psalmist, exiled from Jehovah's tabernacle and altar, the place of his chiefest joy, feels a burning desire in his soul for that highest enjoyment to which a mortal can have access in this valley of tears, even to come once more into Jehovah's courts, and to surround His altar with songs of praise on his lips. This desire of David was not a common one—it was not merely to perform the ceremonies which he was accustomed to do from his youth ; but it was an extraordinary longing and fainting desire to have communion with his God, and to meet him in His holy ordinances—to behold his beauty and majestic splendour in the types of His sanctuary, and to make inquiry in his temple. And to what would all this lead him ? It would inspire him to open his mouth, and to sing and chaunt the praises of the living God, as the angels in the regions of light. But in the 3d verse he complains, that whilst the bird and the dove, which have the privilege of rearing their young ones for Jehovah's altar, are supplied in providence with houses and nests, he, who was privileged to be the first King of the Covenant, and the father of the Messiah—who was to be the substance or antitype of tabernacle, altar, and sacrifices—was driven away from his throne and residence, yea, and from Jehovah's courts which he had erected on Zion, and from the altar, where he had so often offered sacrifices of joy, and sung praises to the Most High. We have no doubt that Jesus referred to this verse when he said, “The foxes have holes, and the fowls of heaven have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.” But there are certain words here which need explanation : דֶּרֶר (Deror) does not mean “swallow,” but “turtle dove.” Both the bird (Tziper) and the turtle dove were frequently used upon the altar, and particularly their young ones. (See Lev. i. 14, v. 7, xii. 6, 8, xiv. 4, &c.) The verb שָׁתַּת (Shoth) has various significations, some of which are “to put, to set in order, to arrange, to prepare, to provide,” &c. Now, our verse must either

read as we have rendered it, or thus, "Even the bird hath found a house, and the dove a nest for herself, which (*i.e.* which bird and dove) supply or prepare their young ones for Thine altar," &c. The word "supply," then, is used in the same sense as when we say, that hens supply us with eggs, trees with fruit, &c. But the reading in our text seems to us to be the more correct one, for אֲשֶׁר (Asher) often signifies "where," *i.e.* "in which place." (See Gen. xxi. 17; Ruth i. 17; Gen. xiii. 3; Exod. xxxii. 34, &c.) But the meaning remains the same, viz. that these birds, with whose young ones the altar was supplied, found nests, while the covenanted king and father of Emmanuel was driven from his house, and from the sweet privileges of Jehovah's tabernacles.

5. Blessed are the men whose strength is in Thee ;
Who make straight their ways in their hearts.
6. When they pass through the valley of tears,
They turn it into a fountain :
But he who conducteth them, shall also array them with blessings.
7. They shall pass on from strength to strength :
They shall then appear before God in Zion.
8. O Jehovah, Thou God of hosts, hear my prayer :
O God of Jacob, listen Thou, Selah, always.

Though we have both noun and pronoun in the singular in verse 5, אָדָם (Adam) "man," and לוֹ (Lo) "his," still they are often used for the plural, as they denote any number of the race; and from the second clause we see that they are intended for the plural. The import of verse 5 is, that these men are happy whose entire confidence, strength, and hope are in God, and who have so ordered their ways in their heart, so fixed them, so established them, as that nothing can move them. מַסְלֹת (Mesiloth) denotes "well-prepared ways," "cast-up highways," from which every difficulty is removed: so is the man whose strength is in Jehovah—his ways are well prepared, cast up, and no difficulty can stop him from pressing toward the mark, for Jehovah is his strength, and the gates of hell shall not be able to prevent his progress. The Psalmist then goes on to explain, in verse 6, that he does not mean to say that they would meet with no difficulty, for every pilgrim who has to pass through the vale of בִּבְחָא (Bacha) tears will turn it into, or, render it a fountain (*i.e.* a fountain of tears, for no pilgrim ever passed that valley without mixing his tears, and contributing to the collection of waters accumulated by those pilgrims that preceded him); but that מוֹדֵד (Moreh) "the Conductor," "the Guide," who leads them in the way (see 2 Kings xvii. 28; Prov. v. 13 especially; Job xxxvi. 22; Ps. xxv. 8; Isai. xxx. 20, and where it is applied to God), will not allow them to faint—that He will cover them with the garments of His blessings, until their wanderings, and battles, and struggles, and difficulties, and trials are over—and that He will refresh their fainting souls by the dew of heaven, and pour balm into their broken hearts. Thus they shall go on from strength to strength, until they shall at length come to their journey's end, and arrive before Jehovah in Zion. But we need

not say much to prove, that though the temporal Zion is here the figure, the heavenly Zion above is the substance, where Jehovah shall wipe away the tears of His wearied pilgrims, whom he mysteriously leads through great tribulation, and through the valley of Baca to eternal rest, and happiness, and joy.

9. O God, look on our Shield,
And regard the face of Thine anointed.
10. For one day in Thy courts is better than a thousand :
I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God,
Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.
11. For a Sun and a Shield is Jehovah God ;
Jehovah will grant grace and glory :
No good will He withhold from those that walk uprightly.
12. O Jehovah Zebaoth ; happy is the man that trusteth in Thee.

When we consider the substance of David's prayer in this Psalm, and the spiritual enjoyments and privileges for which his soul panted—when we remember, that as the inspired Psalmist and father of the great Mediator between God and man, he saw in the types of Jehovah's sanctuary more than the mere shadows—and that when he made inquiry in Jehovah's temple, he saw the great Messiah as the Antitype and Substance of all ancient types ; we have no need to crush the glorious expression of verse 9, as some commentators do, for then we can easily understand who that "Shield" was, on whom to look David prays the Lord. In Jesus alone Jehovah can properly be called "the Shield of His children ;" for without him they cannot be Jehovah's "children," and He cannot be their "Shield" to cover them, but their severe Judge to punish them. David therefore prays that Jehovah would regard his face by looking to the "Shield"—to the Messiah who was to be his descendant—and that He would restore David the anointed to that throne which Jehovah the "Shield" was to inherit for ever. With great propriety he calls him "our Shield," for Jesus was the covenant Angel who went along and guarded Israel in the pillar of cloud and of fire, and drove out the nations before them, and so He himself promised to His spiritual Israel, "Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of ages."

While the foregoing Psalms were composed by David when he was at Mahanaim, and collecting his followers within the strong fortification of that city, and making preparations against the daily expected attack of the rebels, the lxxxix. appears to have been composed at the time when they crossed the Jordan, and surrounded the fortifications of Gilead and Mahanaim. This Psalm contains a recapitulation of the contents of the covenant entered into with David, and the rich promises made to him regarding his own kingdom, and that of his descendants ; and then it represents his present sufferings, and the danger in which he, along with his kingdom was ; and concludes with an ardent prayer to God for mercy, and for restoration according to His promises. The title of the Psalm reads, "A Maskil," or serious contemplation, "for Ethan the Ezrahite." That David, and not Ethan, was the writer of the Psalm, will be seen from internal evidence. It was given to Ethan, or Jeduthun, to be sung by him

and his division of singers. The name Ezrahite seems to have been given to every Levite, as the word *Ezrach* signifies "a sojourner," and the Levites were so called, because they had no territory of their own, but sojourned among their brethren.

PS. LXXXIX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXV.

A SERIOUS CONTEMPLATION.

To be sung by Ethan the Ezrahite.

1. Of the mercies of Jehovah will I ever sing :
To all generations will I record Thy faithfulness with my mouth.
2. For I am persuaded, that mercy will be built up for ever ;
For in the heavens hast Thou established Thy faithfulness.
3. I have made a covenant with my chosen one—
I have sworn unto David my servant.
4. For ever will I establish thy seed,
And for all generations build up thy throne, Selah, for ever.

These four verses form the basis of the Psalm. The Psalmist declares his resolution to celebrate Jehovah's mercies as manifested in the gracious covenant entered into with him, in a song of praise which should remain as a testimony for all generations. He farther declares that he has strong reason to state, that these mercies should be remembered to all generations, for as God who manifested that love towards him had established His faithfulness in the heavens, so His promised mercies must remain for ever, and become yea and amen ; and hence they will ever be celebrated. In verses 3 and 4 the contents of these mercies are represented in the very words of Jehovah in His covenant, how He promised to establish David's throne for ever. The Psalmist then breaks forth in the most glorious strains of adoration as the consequence of Jehovah's promises, and their complete fulfilment in the Messiah.

5. Thus shall the heavens praise Thy wonder-works, O Jehovah ;
Thy faithfulness also, in the assembly of the saints.
6. For who, in the heavens, can be compared unto Jehovah ?
Who likened unto Jehovah, among the sons of the mighty ?
7. God is very terrible in the secret congregation of the saints,
And dreadful to all them that are round about Him.
8. O Jehovah, Thou God of Hosts, who is like unto Thee ?
O Thou mighty God, and Thy faithfulness round about Thee ?
9. Thou rulest the swelling waves of the sea :
When its billows rise, Thou stillest them.
10. Thou didst crush Rahab, wounding her deadly :
With Thy mighty arm didst Thou scatter Thine enemies.
11. Thine are the heavens, Thine also is the earth ;
The world and its fulness : Thou hast founded them all.

12. The north and the south, Thou hast created them :
Tabor and Hermon do shout in Thy name.
13. Thine is an arm possessed of might :
Strong is Thy hand ; exalted is Thy right hand.
14. Righteousness and judgment are the basis of Thy Throne :
Mercy and truth go before Thy face.
15. Happy is the people that know the joyful sound :
O Jehovah, in the light of Thy countenance they shall walk.
16. In Thy name shall they exult all day long ;
And in Thy righteousness they shall be exalted.
17. For Thou art the glory of their strength ;
And in Thy good pleasure Thou exaltest our horn.
18. For unto Jehovah belongeth to be our Shield ;
And unto the Holy One of Israel to be our King.

Such is the description of the glorious and happy results of the covenant made with David, and by, and through which, the mercies and loving kindnesses of God and His good will towards His people were to be so wonderfully displayed. In verse 5 the Psalmist intimates that the heavens, *i.e.* its innumerable hosts, should declare Jehovah's wonder-works, *viz.* His mysterious purposes in the wonderful plan of redemption into which the holy angels were to look with joy, and by the development of which plan the faithfulness of God was also to be praised in the assemblies of the saints below. The development of this gracious plan had its beginning in the establishment of Judah's sceptre, and was first displayed in the covenant made with David, which contained the promise that from the fruit of his loins Jehovah would raise up the great Shiloh, the Saviour of the world. After having celebrated Jehovah's praise in the manifestation of his glory in all His mighty works which he had showed unto Israel, and in all the revelations made to them, the Psalmist says in verse 15, "Happy is the people, or the nation, that know the joyful sound." This refers primarily to the joyful sound of the trumpets on the feast-days which accompanied the sacrifices, especially the burnt and peace-offerings, when the musical Levites with their instruments, and the priests with their trumpets, surrounded the altar, and shouted in triumph and joy (see Numb. x. 10). It needed not much knowledge, however, to understand that joyful sound which the priests and Levites raised at the altar of burnt and peace-offerings when the smoke of them ascended from the midst of the sacred flames towards heaven as a sweet smelling savour unto Jehovah. But the knowledge which was required of the people of God was, that they might see in it a representation of the triumphant ascension of the great Burnt-offering in the midst of the shouting multitudes of the heavenly hosts, leading captivity captive. This is what David means when he says, "Happy is the people that know the joyful sound," *i.e.* the joyous and glorious thing represented by it. He then adds the reason : for they, the enlightened saints, shall walk in the light of Jehovah's countenance—to them the shadows of old afforded light, and even in the mere types they saw a radiant brightness, and in every sacrifice they beheld the great King of David's covenant, even the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. Having described in the next three verses the happiness and triumph of the

saints in their Saviour, the Psalmist proceeds in verses 19—37 inclusive, to give a full account of the contents of the covenant.

19. Then spakest Thou in vision to Thy saint, and saidst :
I have laid help on one that is mighty—
I have exalted one chosen from the people.
20. I have found David my servant ;
With My holy oil have I anointed him.
21. With whom My alliance shall be established ;
Mine arm also shall strengthen him.
22. No enemy shall be able to vanquish him,
And no son of violence shall afflict him :
23. For I will crush his adversaries before his face,
And I will plague those that shall hate him.
24. My faithfulness also, and my grace shall be with him,
And in My name shall his horn be exalted.
25. And I will extend his power over the sea,
And his right hand over the rivers.
26. He shall thus address me, "Thou art my Father—
My God, and the Rock of my salvation."
27. I also will appoint him as my first-born—
Most High, above the kings of the earth.
28. My mercy will I preserve for him for ever,
And My covenant shall be steadfast with him.
29. I also will establish his seed for eternity,
And his throne like the days of the heavens.
30. Should his children forsake My law,
And refuse to walk after My orders ;
31. Should they profane My ordinances,

* Many commentators plead for the plural reading לְחַכְדִּיקָה (Lachsidecha), "to thy saints," following the LXX. and many old MSS. Dr Hengstenberg, who also adopts the plural reading, erroneously refers it to the people, i.e. that God spake to the prophet regarding the promises to the people. But this is a great mistake, for the people have nothing to do in all the Psalm; and the conjecture as to people speaking in the last part of it is equally erroneous. The people of God, indeed, are those to whom the blessings of the covenant extend. They enjoyed them temporally under David, and do enjoy them spiritually under the dominion of Christ, the last and everliving King of the covenant. But in this Psalm the King of the covenant is spoken of, and not the people. At the same time we must state, that we prefer the plural reading, "thy saints," i.e. Samuel and Nathan, through whom the covenant promises were made to David. When we follow carefully the description of the contents of the covenant promises, as contained in verses 10—37, we see clearly, 1st, That the promises made to David by Samuel at the time when he was anointed, and afterwards, and those more spiritual, more glorious, and more Messianic promises, made and ratified through Nathan, are interwoven with each other. Hence, it can be understood how the plural reading will be preferable, "Then," at certain times, (for זָרָא (Oz), often refers to different times as well as to one particular time), "spakest Thou in vision to Thy holy ones, or, to Thy saints," &c., i.e. Samuel and Nathan; and 2d, That neither David alone, nor the Messiah alone, is spoken of, but that from beginning to end the King of the covenant is he unto whom these glorious promises were made. Some of these promises were fulfilled in David the first King of the covenant, and some were, are, and will be fulfilled in Jesus, the last spiritual and eternal King thereof. Others were fulfilled in David temporally, and received, and will yet receive, their final fulfilment in Jesus spiritually.

- And refuse to observe My commandments ;
 32. Then will I visit their transgression with a rod,
 And with stripes their iniquity.
 33. But My mercy will I not utterly withdraw from him,
 Nor will I be wanting in My faithfulness.
 34. I will not violate My covenant,
 And that which hath passed My lips will I not alter.
 35. I have once sworn by My holiness,
 That I would never deny this unto David :
 36. That his seed should endure eternally,
 And his throne like the sun before me.
 37. Like the moon shall he be established for ever,
 And as a faithful witness in the skies, Selah, for ever.

Thus far extends the description of the covenant promises made to David by Samuel and Nathan regarding himself, and especially regarding his seed the Messiah. When in verses 30—34, we hear the backsliding of David's seed spoken of, and their punishment for the same by merciful corrections, we find it literally fulfilled in his temporal successors (see 1 Kings xi. 10—13, 29—39, &c.) ; but it receives daily fulfilment also in the spiritual seed of the great David. The King of David's covenant is spoken of in this Psalm, and David as the first King of that covenant ; and as the father of Messiah, he recapitulated the contents of the promises in order to build upon them the bitter complaints he subsequently pours forth unto the faithful Jehovah, because of the misery he was in, and because all the promises seemed to be shattered under Absalom's rebellion.

38. But now, Hast Thou pushed away and rejected ?—
 Art Thou wroth with thine anointed ?
 39. Hast Thou overthrown the covenant with Thy servant ?
 Hast Thou profaned his crown in the dust ?
 40. That Thou hast torn down all his fences—
 That Thou hast caused trembling in all his fortifications.
 41. All that pass by the way plunder him :
 He is become a reproach to his neighbours.
 42. Thou hast exalted the right hand of his adversaries :
 Thou hast caused all his enemies to rejoice.
 43. Wilt Thou also turn the edge of his sword ?
 Wilt thou not support him in the battle ?
 44. Thou hast caused his glory to cease,
 And his throne Thou hast cast down to the ground.
 45. Thou hast shortened the days of his vigour :
 Thou hast covered him with shame, Selah, continually.

It is an entire mystery to us why commentators are so fond of perverting this Psalm by ascribing the authorship of it to another than David, and placing it in a late period. Besides that the language is David's, we maintain that blindness alone can apply it to any other king at any other

period. But we do not see what should ail them at the truth, when it is applied to David at the period to which we have assigned it. The reader will observe that the foregoing eight verses are put in regular contrast with the promises of the covenant, as verse 38 with verse 33, verse 39 with verse 34, &c. David's throne under Absalom's rebellion was in the greatest danger; and when the rebels invaded Gilead, the land beyond Jordan, all his friends who were in the different fortifications trembled for the issue; "Thou hast caused trembling in all his fortifications." The expression in verse 41, "They that pass by plundered him," must refer either to Shimei, for the word rendered plundered may perfectly signify Shimei's reviling, by which he bereaved David of his honour on his way to Jordan, or to some invasion of the boundaries, by bands of wandering robbers during the disturbance. Having spread before the Lord his danger and misery, he begins to supplicate speedy help and deliverance.

46. How long, O Jehovah ! Wilt Thou hide Thyself for ever ?
Shall Thine anger burn like fire ?
47. O remember me, how transitory I am :
Hast Thou then made all men for mere vanity ?
48. Who is the man that shall live, and not see death,
By rescuing his soul from the power of the grave, Selah, for ever ?
49. Where are Thy mercies of the former times, O Lord,
Regarding which Thou didst swear to David by Thy faithfulness ?
50. Remember, Lord, the reproach of Thy servant,
Which I bear in my bosom of all the many peoples ;
51. For Thine enemies reproach Thee, O Jehovah,
When they reproach the footsteps of Thine anointed.
52. Blessed be Jehovah for evermore. Amen and Amen.

In verses 47 and 48 the transitoriness of human life is put forth by David as a reason for his ardent plea for speedy deliverance, as in Psalm xxxix. In verse 50 read "servant" in the singular, for it must refer to David, as the second clause clearly shows that the reproach is that of his enemies cast on him when in exile on account of Absalom. Inasmuch as the Lord pledged himself by an oath to fulfil the promises to David (see verse 35), the latter, therefore, calls the reproach of the enemies "the reproach of Jehovah," for in mocking and scorning David they mocked Him who gave him the promises.

The following Psalm was composed by David, and sung by his warriors, when they went forth from Mahanaim to meet the armies of the rebel Absalom.

PS. XX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXVI.

"To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A SONG COMPOSED BY DAVID.

1. Jehovah shall answer thee in the day of distress :
The name of the God of Jacob shall defend thee.

2. He shall send forth thy help from the holy place ;
And out of Zion He shall support thee.
3. May He remember all thy offerings,
And thy burnt-offerings which he favourably accepted, Selah,
always.

The first verse of this Psalm proves that David was in great distress when the people offered this prayer for him, and hence there is no other period in his life than this to which the Psalm can be applied. From the second verse we learn that the Ark was not with the King and his army at this time, and therefore they pray that Jehovah would send help from Zion. Verse 3 clearly indicates that there was no altar, and no sacrifices were offered by the King before going forth to battle, as was always the case, and therefore they pray that Jehovah would remember his offerings and burnt-offerings, which he used to bring in great numbers at Jerusalem, and which the Lord had graciously accepted.

4. May He grant unto thee according to thine heart,
And fulfil all thy counsels.
5. We shall shout for joy in thy salvation,
And in the name of our God we will set up the banners :
May Jehovah fulfil all thy petitions.
6. Even now, I know that Jehovah hath saved His anointed,
In answering him from His holy heavens,
With the saving strength of His right hand.
7. When some depended on chariots, others on horses,
But we made mention of the name of Jehovah our God ;
8. They were overthrown and fell ; but we rose and stood steadfast.
9. O Jehovah, grant salvation to the King :
May He answer us in the day when we call.

While in the first five verses the prayers of the people are offered for their King in his present distressing circumstances, in the three following verses they gather courage from past experience, in that they had witnessed the mighty assistance which the Lord had granted to David against the tremendous armies of his enemies with their horses and chariots, as described in Psalm xviii. The singular in verse 6 we take to stand for the nation ; "I Israel," have often witnessed how Jehovah hath saved His anointed, &c. In the last verse we decidedly prefer the division of the Septuagint, &c., as we have given it in our text.

When the generous and valiant warriors of David were divided into three armies to go forth to meet the rebellious multitude under Absalom, he offered to go himself with them into the battle, but they resisted his proposal, saying to him, "Thou shalt not go forth : for if we flee away, they will not care for us, neither if half of us die will they care for us : but now thou art worth ten thousand of us ; therefore it is better that thou succour us out of the city." (2 Sam. xviii. 3.) The meaning of this generous address was, that they knew well that the rebels would be satisfied with none of them until they had killed the King ; but the affection of his servants was so great that they would rather see ten thousand of themselves fall

than lose their King. Thus was David providentially delivered from the melancholy necessity of fighting personally against his own child, and at the same time prevented from sparing his life. The unfortunate father still remembered that he was his child, and confident that the Lord would avenge him of the rebels, he commanded Joab to spare Absalom's life. But Joab was too experienced a general—too hard a man—and, indeed, too faithful a servant, to lose the opportunity of removing the unnatural and inhuman rebel out of the way for ever, and thus preventing him from again tormenting his aged father, and convulsing the whole kingdom. As might naturally have been expected from the strong affection which David bore to Absalom, when he was informed of his death, he mourned bitterly over the fearful end which had overtaken him, and the valiant and faithful conquerors stole into their own houses covered with shame. But on the rebuke imparted to the King by Joab, who represented to him the risk he ran of alienating the hearts of his attached friends by indulging this excessive grief for his rebel son, and making their lives which they had hazarded in his behalf of no account in comparison with Absalom's, he instantly arose, and sat in the gate to salute his friends and servants, and to acknowledge their faithfulness.

The following Psalm was composed by David after the victory gained by his army over that of the rebels. This Psalm, which is the ix. in the common order, has been usually misunderstood by commentators because of its containing certain expressions, as for instance that in verse 5, "Thou hast rebuked the heathen;" from which they have concluded that it must celebrate a victory gained over heathen. But this is a false notion, for while David celebrates the victory gained over the rebellious Israelites under Absalom, he at the same time remembers his former deliverances from, and victories over the heathen nations, as will be seen from internal evidence. But even the title of the Psalm, which has caused so much argument and difficulty, tells expressly that it was composed על-מיתת בן (Al Muth Laben), "on occasion of the death of the son;" and as David is mentioned in the title as the author of it, there is no need to say more concerning it, for it shows itself, that it was composed after a victory. The wildest and most irrational expositions have been given of this plain and very expressive title, founded simply on a misunderstanding of several expressions in the Psalm which led to the supposition that it does not agree with the occasion mentioned; but we shall see that from beginning to end the Psalm justifies the title in its sentiments.

PS. IX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXVII.

"To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A Song of praise composed by David on occasion of the death of the son (Absalom).

1. I will praise Jehovah with my whole heart :
I will declare all Thy works of wonder.

2. I will rejoice and exult in Thee ;
I will sing praise unto Thy name, O Thon Most High !
3. When mine enemies were turned to flight,
They stumbled and perished before Thy presence.
4. For Thou hast maintained my justice and my cause ;
Thou satest on the throne as the righteous Judge.
5. Thou hast rebuked nations, Thou hast destroyed the wicked ;
Their names Thou hast blotted out for ever and ever.
6. O thou enemy ! destructions are come to a perpetual end :
And the cities which thou hast demolished perished along with
their names ;*
7. But Jehovah remaineth for evermore ;
He hath established His throne for judgment ;
8. And He shall judge the world in righteousness ;
He shall dispense justice to the peoples with uprightness :
9. And Jehovah shall be a high fortress for the oppressed,
A high fortress in times of distress,
10. Thus shall they trust in Thee who know Thy name ;
For Thou, O Jehovah, hast not forsaken those that fear Thee.

Let us now examine the substance of these ten verses, and see how admirably they suit the subject indicated in the title, viz. that this Psalm was composed after the death of Absalom, when the army of the conspiring rebels was put to flight. The reader will remember how all the Psalms composed by David at the period of Absalom's rebellion, are pervaded by prayers and pleas, that the Lord would soon appear as the righteous Judge to avenge him of the rebels who had risen up against him ; especially in Psalm vii. chronologically Ps. ciii. 6, 7 (see exposition there). In the Psalm before us we see that prayer answered ; " For Thou hast maintained my justice and my cause ; Thou satest on the throne as the righteous Judge " (verse 4). The results of this righteous judgment are described in verse 3 as having ensued in the destruction and flight of the rebels, of whom there fell 20,000 (see 2 Sam. xviii. 7, 8), besides what the forest devoured of them. In verses 5 and 6, David remembers the victories which Jehovah granted him over his heathen enemies, as Amalek, Philistia, Moab, Edom,

* Dr Hengstenberg's exposition of this verse is not only an entire perversion of the sense of the passage in itself, but in refuting two opinions of others he makes two assertions regarding the meaning of the word חָרֵב (Chorev), which are both false. The first is " that חָרֵב never signifies *devastation* in an active sense (let it be remembered that in our verse the word has no ה, but is in the plural חָרֵבוֹת [Charavoth], from חָרֵב [Chorev], which is either active or subjective), but only *destructions, desolations.*" The second is, that " desolations do not suit persons." That both these statements are erroneous, see Judg. xvi. 24 ; Ezek. xix. 7, where it is actively used ; and that it suits persons, see 2 Kings iii. 23, xix. 17, where the same word is used for persons, no matter whether you render it *desolation* or *destruction*. But the worst feature in his exposition of the verse is, that he applies the second clause to God, i.e. that God has destroyed the cities, but this is an absurdity not worth dwelling on. The Psalmist here triumphantly addresses the destroyers of cities, telling them that in their own destruction which overtook them by the sentence of the righteous Judge, their desolations are brought to a perpetual end—they can no more destroy. Then he shows that, although these destroyers, along with the cities they made desolate, are now forgotten and out of memory, yet Jehovah their Judge was still the same, and would remain the same unchangeable righteous Judge for evermore.

Ammon, &c., and shows how these destroyers of cities and countries were cut off and put to silence, and an end made of their desolations, and the names of those cities which they had laid in ruins blotted out; while that Great Judge, by whose authority and assistance he had been enabled to destroy them, was still the same unchangeable and holy One whose throne was established in righteousness, and that He was the same God who had just judged the rebels by destroying and putting them to flight before his army. The Psalmist now turns to address the inhabitants of Zion, calling on them to praise God for having delivered them from rebellious tyranny.

11. Sing praise unto Jehovah, ye inhabitants of Zion :
Declare among the nations His wonder-works :
12. For He that maketh inquiry for guilt remembered them :
He hath not forgotten the complaints of the afflicted.
13. Be gracious unto me, O Jehovah :
Consider my affliction because of my enemies ;
O Thou who hast lifted me up from the gates of death !
14. That I may declare all Thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion—
That I may rejoice in Thy salvation.
15. The nations have sunk into the pit they have made,
In the very net which they hid, their foot was taken.
16. Jehovah is manifested in the judgment which he executed :
In the works of his own hands the wicked is ensnared.
O meditate on this, Selah, continually.

In verse 11, not Jehovah is addressed as the dweller of Zion (as most of commentators erroneously suppose), but the real inhabitants of Zion are called upon to praise Jehovah. The reason why they should praise is given in verse 12, viz., because He that searches out and punishes guilt hath remembered them, and not forgotten their cries. The word דָּמִים (Damim) very often signifies "guilt, crime," and not blood, and here it denotes that Jehovah avengeth crimes, that He remembered the exiled children of Zion, and punished the rebels. In verses 14 and 15 David prays the Lord who had delivered him from death, to restore him to Zion, that he might there celebrate His praise, and rejoice in his salvation, and thus complete his victory and deliverance. As in verse 5 he alludes to his former victories over the heathen nations, and shows, that God was still the same righteous One who had now judged the conspirators, so in verse 15 he shows again that as his heathen enemies had always sunk into the very pit which they had digged for him, so (verse 16) Jehovah was made manifest now by the judgment he had executed on the rebels, and had caused them to be ensnared in their own nets. To those wonderful manifestations of the Divine righteousness David calls the attention of men by adding "Higayon," which means meditation, and "Selah," continually, i.e., meditate continually on the righteous and mysterious ways of the Almighty Judge.

17. The wicked shall be turned into hell —
All the nations that forget God.

18. For not for ever shall the destitute be forgotten :
Nor shall the expectation of the poor perish for ever.
19. Arise, O Jehovah, let not man prevail ;
Let the nations be judged in Thy sight.
20. O Jehovah, put Thou fear within them :
Let the nations know that they are but mortals, *Selah*, always.

The *Selah* at the close refers to the words, "Let the nations know," *i.e.* that Jehovah would put fear within their hearts that they might "always" remember that they are but "Enosh," mortal men ; and hence they will stand in awe, and not again plot against the righteous.

When the rebel tribes saw that their army was put to flight and routed before David's servants, and that the wicked Absalom was dead, it repented them exceedingly of what they had done. David wrote letters to the High Priests at Jerusalem to remind those of the tribe of Judah, that they ought to be the first to bring back the King to the capital. Accordingly the men of Judah made haste to go and meet him at Jordan, and bring him back. These were followed by a great multitude of the ten tribes ; and once more did David display his generous and forgiving spirit in pardoning the wicked Shimei, who had also come forth to meet him, accompanied by a thousand men of the tribe of Benjamin, to whom likewise the King promised his pardon.

Thus was David restored to his throne and kingdom in splendour and with joy, after all the miseries which he had endured from the rebellion now so happily crushed. But another trial yet awaited him, though not so great or dangerous as the former ; for he had no sooner returned to Jerusalem than an insurrection broke out, headed by a wicked man of the tribe of Benjamin, named Shebah, the son of Bichri, who blew the trumpet, and said, "We have no part in David, neither have we any inheritance in the son of Jesse," &c. A great number of misguided men gathered around him, though the whole tribe of Judah remained now faithful to David. But this insurrection was speedily and effectually suppressed, as we read at large in 2 Sam. xx. It was on this occasion that David composed Psalm lxii., which contains an admonition to Israel regarding their faithlessness—their fluctuating disposition—their adjoining themselves to any rebel—and their vain attempts to change or renovate the government. As its title imports, it was intended to be performed by Jeduthun's or Ethan's party, on the instrument invented by that head musician, which was called by his name, "*Jeduthun*."

PS. LXII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXVIII.

"To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A Song composed by David, to be performed on the instrument of
Jeduthun.

1. Upon God alone my soul waiteth patiently :
From Him cometh my salvation.

2. He alone is my Rock, and my salvation ;
My High Fortress ; I shall not be violently shaken.
3. How long will ye try violent attacks against a man ?
How long will ye all attempt murderous plans ?
How long be like an inclining wall and tottering hedge ?
4. Only because of his exaltation do they consult to cast him down ;
They delight in falsehood : with their mouth they bless,
But inwardly they curse, Selah, continually.

The Psalmist having indicated in the first two verses that, Jehovah being his salvation and his high fortress, he could not, therefore, be violently shaken or completely moved, though small calamities might overtake him as the chastisements of a kind Father, proceeds to address the fluctuating rebels by asking them how long they would continue their vain attempts against him. The "how long" in the first clause of verse 3 extends to the other two clauses also ; "How long will ye all attempt, or resort to, murderous plans ?" for indeed both insurrections aimed at nothing less than his violent death. "How long will ye be like an inclining wall and a tottering hedge," i.e. without steadfastness, ready to be moved by every wind—ready to follow every wretched rebel. In verse 4 he shows that all this arose from a wicked jealousy of his superiority and greatness ; and lastly, he exposes their falsehood, how that when they came to Jordan to take him back after the suppression of Absalom's rebellion, they pretended loyalty and fidelity, but as soon as another insurgent appeared, they followed him.

5. Only upon God wait thou, O my soul ;
For from Him is my expectation.
6. He alone is my Rock and my salvation ;
My High Fortress : I shall not be moved.
7. In God is my salvation and my glory ;
The Rock of my strength : my shelter is in God.
8. Trust in Him at all times, O ye people ;
Pour out your hearts before Him :
God is our Shelter, Selah, for ever.
9. A mere vanity are the sons of common men,
Falsehood are the sons of the great men :
In the scale of the balance they mount up,
For they are altogether light as vanity.
10. Put no trust in oppression ; be not vainly proud of robbery :
If wealth increase rapidly, set not your heart upon it.
11. Once hath God spoken ; twice have I heard the same ;
That the power belongeth to God ;
12. And that is Thy mercy, O God,
When thou rewardest a man according to his deed.

In verse 9 David shows how false and deluding trust in man is, as a reason for what he so often repeats in the Psalm, that in God alone is his hope and his salvation. In verse 10 he warns the men of violence against entertaining the hope that they would ever prosper, and he intends thereby

also to impart a lesson to others to keep themselves from that delusion. In verse 11 he seeks to impress on the minds of men that Jehovah is almighty; and in verse 12, the statement follows, that that Almighty Jehovah is a righteous Judge, who will requite every man according to his desert. The expression in verse 11, "Once hath God spoken," means, that He hath spoken in His word of revealed truth; and the following in the same verse, "twice have I heard the same," is equivalent to, "often have I experienced the same," i.e. often have I seen that Jehovah is almighty; mighty to save his faithful children, and mighty to punish the wicked. Both these acts David ascribes in verse 12, to God's mercy, for it is not only of His free mercy that He acknowledges and rewards any man's good deeds, which are after all but as filthy rags, but it is also of His mercy that He punishes, and stops the jaws of the wicked, who would else swallow us up.

We come now to consider the latter part of David's history, and the different events which then occurred, inasmuch as they stand in immediate connection with the several Psalms composed during that period. Of all the heathen nations which David had subdued in his earlier wars, none seems to have attempted to revolt, except Philistia. That bitter enemy of Israel had attempted it twice, as soon as he was settled on Zion, but was routed and subdued. Before the great Syrian wars, that nation was completely conquered by David, and Gath, and all the towns round about it, were taken possession of by him. But notwithstanding of all this, we are told of no less than four wars as having subsequently taken place between them and Israel, in one of which David would probably have been slain, had not Abishai timeously rescued him from the sword of the giant, by killing the latter. (2 Sam. xxi. 15—22.) But although the nation was now alike free from internal disturbance, and outward annoyance, yet the high and terrible Judge was not quite at peace with Israel. A fearful famine, which lasted for three years, and devoured the nation, was sent upon them in consequence of the bloody Saul, who broke the oath which Israel had made to the Gibeonites, and mercilessly destroyed the latter in great numbers. The wrath of God, who avengeth the crimes of fathers upon their children, was kindled against the bloody house, and seven victims of that family removed the Divine anger from Israel at that time. Nor was this the end of their troubles, for Israel had yet a debt to pay to their offended God before rest could be procured for them. In the language of the sacred narrative, "And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah." (2 Sam. xxiv. 1.)* Even Joab, hardened and wicked

* In reading this statement, we must observe first, that the anger of the righteous Judge was kindled before Israel was numbered, and that the numbering was allowed by God to take place, in order to prepare the way for their punishment, which they deserved according to His justice for former, and probably, secret sins. Such is the process by which Jehovah purifies His children, and such the way in which he brings about even the destruction of the wicked rebels. When the incorrigible Egyptian rebels had filled up their measure of wickedness, and were accordingly doomed to destruction, Jehovah brought about the terrible event in such a manner as that His name should be glorified by it. For this purpose He hardened their hearts, not that they should sin and deserve destruction—for this they deserved long before, and their doom was sealed—but that their merited punishment should be so inflicted as that

as he was, dreaded the consequences, but all his arguments had no influence with the King, who was determined on the measure; and accordingly he and many other officers were despatched throughout the land for the purpose; and after an absence of nine months and twenty days, returned with the number of the fighting men of Israel and Judah, which they laid before the King.

The sin which David committed in numbering Israel was not, ~~as some~~ imagine, in that he broke the command of God in not numbering them by taking the half shekels from each of them according to ~~Exod.~~ xxx. 12—16, for this David would have done. But his sin was more grievous, ~~because~~ he had no right at all to do so; for when in the above mentioned passage the Lord commanded Moses to number them, it was only for a special purpose, and the command was given to *Moses alone*, as we may learn from Numb. i. iii., &c. Israel was a Theocracy, under the immediate guidance of Jehovah, who had often enabled their hundreds to fight and conquer thousands of their enemies. It was pride of heart, therefore, which instigated David to the commission of this sin, his object being to ascertain the number of his warriors, and the Lord permitted it in order that the intended lesson for Israel and him should be taught them, and that His own purposes might be fulfilled. (See foot-note, p. 483.) Even Joab, when he heard the King's resolution, remonstrated with him, saying, "Let the Lord thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the King may see it: but why doth my lord the King delight in this thing?" (2 Sam. xxiv. 3.) David's heart soon began to forebode the terrible consequences of his folly, when the Lord sent the prophet Gad to him, telling him to choose one of three punishments, either seven years of famine in the land, or three months' persecution from an enemy, before whom he should be obliged to flee again, or three days' pestilence in the land; "And David said unto Gad, I am in great distress; let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great, and let me not fall into the hand of man." (2 Sam. xxiv. 14.) The Lord therefore sent a pestilence upon Israel, and in one day there died of them 70,000 throughout the land. The destroying angel then came to Jerusalem, and when David and the elders of Israel saw him standing between heaven and earth with his drawn sword in his hand stretched over the city, they fell

His name should be glorified even in the very infliction. This is just as when a murderer is led from prison to the open street to be executed, for while it is all the same for him where his life is taken, his punishment, publicly inflicted, should operate as a warning to spectators, and the law be held in reverence. So with the Egyptians, while their doom was deserved and determined, the Lord, who resolved both to make their punishment serve as a momentous lesson to Israel, and to glorify His own name by it, hardened their hearts, and blinded their minds as to the danger of following Israel into the midst of the sea, so that their sentence should be executed there in a wonderful way, and should serve at the same time His own purposes.

But such are Jehovah's ways even with regard to the chastisement of His own children. Israel appeared guilty before Him who knows the heart and tries the reins of man, and who is acquainted with all his thoughts. In accomplishing their deserved punishment in such a manner, that it should convey both to David and to themselves, great and important lessons for the future, He actually brought it about that David should commit the grievous sin of numbering Israel. And how was this done? It was, as we are told in 1 Chron. xxi. 1, that the Lord allowed Satan to stimulate David to number the people, and to prevail. When it was done, David was convinced of his sin—the terror of the fearful results was generally felt—the judgment of God was executed on Israel—David and the whole nation were humbled to the dust. Then Jehovah revealed to Israel the place of the temple, and Israel knew with what God they had to do whose temple was now to be built. Jehovah our God is a consuming fire.

down before the Lord in sackcloth and ashes, and David said, "Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly : but these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me and against my father's house." The Lord then sent Gad to him, who commanded him to build an altar on the place where the destroying angel appeared, and on which place stood the thrashing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite.* David went immediately to Araunah, bought from him the thrashing-floor, built an altar to the Lord, and offered thereon burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and called upon the name of the Lord. The Lord answered the prayer by sending fire from heaven to consume the sacrifices ; and thus David saw that this was the real place for the altar of burnt-offerings, and he said, " This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar for burnt-offerings unto Israel." (See 1 Chron. xxi. 18—30, xxii. 1.) From this period peace and prosperity were firmly established in Israel, and the glory and splendour of David's latter days began. All storms were now hushed—all disturbances quelled—temporal and spiritual felicity filled the palaces of Zion—and David was glorious on his throne. Psalm lxxxv. was composed after the above event, and was intended as a triumphant song for Israel.

PS. LXXXV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXIX.

"To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A SONG OF PRAISE FOR THE SONS OF KORAH.

1. Thou, O Jehovah, hast extended favour to Thy land :
Thou hast redressed the affliction of Jacob.
2. Thou hast pardoned the iniquity of Thy nation ;
Thou hast covered all their sins, Selah, for ever.

The above particulars in David's history to which this Psalm refers, will be a perfect exposition of this introduction to it. Regarding the words **שָׁב שְׁבוּתָ** (Shov Shevuth), which misapprehension has usually rendered by "turn the captivity," thereby causing many perversions, the reader is referred to the General Introduction, page 29, foot-note, and especially to the 9th verse of Psalm xiv., page 148, where the same words are also falsely rendered by translators.

* Josephus, Book vii., chap. v., par. 3, says,—“ I shall now make mention of Araunah, who was a wealthy man among the Jebusites, but was not slain by David in the siege of Jerusalem, because of the good will he bore to the Hebrews, and a particular benignity and affection which he had to the king himself.” Josephus speaks to the same effect in the place where he relates the event of the pestilence, and of the altar which David was directed to build at the place of Araunah's property, and where the temple was afterwards erected, and as having been the exact spot where Abraham offered up Isaac by faith. I have seen a similar statement in a manuscript of traditions older than the writings of Josephus, and which only differs from the latter in that it makes out Araunah to have been a Jebusite prince. It says also, that as Israel had always great reverence and affection for Mount Moriah, and that even when Zion and Moriah were still in the hands of the Jebusites, Araunah allowed them to build an altar on that mountain, and to offer sacrifices, though the particular spot where Abraham offered Isaac was not known until it was revealed to David.

3. Thou hast restrained all Thy wrath :
Thou hast withdrawn the indignation of Thine anger.
4. Accept of us again, O God of our salvation ;
And completely remove Thy wrath from us.
5. Wilt Thou then for ever be angry with us ?
Wilt Thou extend Thy wrath to all generations ?
6. Wilt Thou not turn unto us to revive us,
So that Thy people may rejoice in Thee ?
7. Show us, O Jehovah, Thy mercy, and grant us Thy salvation.
8. I do perceive what God Jehovah will speak ;
That He will speak peace to His people and to His saints :
O may they not turn again to folly !
9. Truly His salvation is nigh to them that fear Him,
That glory may dwell in our land.
10. Mercy and truth have met together—
Righteousness and peace have embraced each other.
11. Truth shall spring forth from the earth,
For Righteousness looked down from heaven.

Now we perceive in this Psalm, especially from the 7th to the 11th verse inclusive, a most important and glorious Messianic revelation, but to bring out which we must return to the history with which the Psalm is connected. God was angry with His people, wherefore he moved David to number them, in consequence of which the terrible pestilence broke out which devoured 70,000 of them in one day. The end of this calamity was most glorious, for it issued in the revelation made to David regarding the site of the temple. There he built an altar and offered peace and burnt-offerings, and Jehovah answered him by fire from heaven. It was from that time forward that perfect peace was established for Israel, and which continued for more than a century. In reference to this, David says at the beginning of the Psalm: "Thou, O Jehovah, hast extended favour to Thy land . . . Thou hast pardoned the iniquity of Thy nation. . . . Thou hast restrained all Thy wrath," &c. All this was evidenced by the fire that came down from heaven as a sign that Israel's sacrifices were graciously accepted, and all their sins pardoned. Encouraged by this gracious token, the Psalmist shows in verses 5 and 6, that Jehovah's anger was not to continue long, but that He was to revive His people, and make them rejoice in Him. In verse 7 he prays for a continuance of Jehovah's mercy, and manifestation of His salvation. But in the 8th verse he says: "I do perceive, or understand," viz. by the recent extraordinary manifestation of the Divine favour—"I do perceive what God Jehovah will speak," i.e. what Jehovah intends regarding his people; and what is it? "That He will speak peace to His people, and to His saints," i.e. the fire from heaven showed that He was now perfectly reconciled to them, and as the peace-offerings ascended on high in the midst of the sacred flames as a sweet-smelling savour to God, so would He pour down peace upon His people in rivers. He therefore adds, "O may they not turn again to folly!" may they so walk as to ensure the continuance of that blessed relation to their God. But the inspired Psalmist saw in the glorious manifestation of Jehovah's favour on Moriah more than a mere site of the temple. We have

seen on many occasions throughout the Psalms, that David never lost sight of the great Antitype of temple and sacrifice, by whom the plan of salvation was to be completed in its full glory. Although the Ark and Cherubim had hitherto been moved from place to place, yet the fact that it was now revealed that Moriah was to be the site of the temple, was a great step towards the manifestation of Jehovah's salvation. David therefore says in verse 9, "Truly His salvation is nigh to them that fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land;" or, seeing that the place is now made known where glory will dwell in a fixed habitation in our land. Remembering now how wonderfully light sprang forth from darkness, joy from mourning, glory from desolation, and life from death; seeing that the end of the display of God's righteousness in bringing the fearful pestilence on Israel for their sin, was the manifestation of His favour and salvation—just as by the death and agonies of the Messiah, God's holiness was to be displayed and vindicated while the end was to be glorious, issuing in the manifestation of His salvation—the Psalmist says, "Mercy and Truth (Truth means the manifestation of the Divine holiness and justice, and the rectitude of the Divine government) have met together; Righteousness and Peace have embraced each other;" i.e. they appeared at once and in harmony; when Jehovah in His righteousness punished us with pestilence, mercy and peace, pardon and salvation, also appeared, and rivers of Divine favour were poured on us, when He accepted our offerings by fire from heaven, and assured us of His pardoning love. The Messianic prophecy then follows in verse 11: "Truth shall spring forth from the earth." Jesus the Messiah, the Prince of Truth and Peace, was to be born on earth. Isaiah calls Him "A root out of the dry ground" (liii. 2); Zechariah says, "Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH (or Plant); and he shall grow up out of his place (or spring forth by himself), and he shall build the temple of the Lord" (vi. 12.) Seeing then that Jesus was to spring forth as a plant out of the earth, and to build the spiritual temple of God, and that the site of the typical temple was now wonderfully revealed to David, David says, "Truth shall spring forth out of the earth, for righteousness (or "Deliverance," as we have shown that צֶדֶק [Tzedek] often means) looked down from heaven." Jehovah began to make preparations for sending deliverance to His people by the Deliverer that was to be born on earth.

The Psalmist then concludes, that Jehovah would now pour upon Israel temporal mercies and blessings along with the spiritual, and that the work of salvation would now make quick progress towards its completion.

12. Yea, Jehovah shall grant us the Good One :
Our land also shall yield its increase.*
13. Righteousness shall go before Him,
And He shall direct His steps for His journey.

* "The land shall yield its increase:" יְבוּלָהּ (Yevulah), which also means "its produce," or, "its fruit," refers not only to the temporal, but also to the spiritual fruit, the Messiah, who was to be born there, for this expression stands in close connection with verse 11, "Truth shall spring forth from the earth." So Isa. iv. 2, "In that day shall the Branch of the Lord (or the Plant of the Lord) be beautiful and glorious, and the Fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that shall escape of Israel."

The last verse has been entirely misunderstood by translators and commentators, and this is no matter of surprise, seeing that they failed to discover who was the individual spoken of, and what journey there was before him. But as in verse 12 the Psalmist expresses his confidence that Jehovah would now send, or give, the *טוב* (*Tov*), the "Good One," so in verse 13 he says, that righteousness, or deliverance, shall go before Him, and that He, the Messiah, shall direct, or prepare His steps for the journey. This is as much as to say, that from what Jehovah now manifested of His good pleasure, the Messiah shall come and not tarry long.

After the glorious revelation was made to David regarding the site of the temple, he began with much energy to prepare all possible materials for that holy edifice which was to be reared by Solomon his son. He set masons to hew wrought stones for the house of God, and the Zidonias brought cedar trees from Lebanon. He also gathered together all the silver, and gold, and copper, and brass, which he had taken from the conquered cities of the heathen nations in great abundance. To this store the princes of the tribes added their large contributions in gold and silver. Then the bands of the Levites were organised and properly divided under their chief musicians into twenty-four wards or bands, with their instruments, and others of the Levites were appointed as overseers over the workmen. Moreover, we are told in 1 Chron. xxviii. 12, that the pattern of the temple and of all its holy utensils was shown to David by the Spirit, and he communicated the same to Solomon his son before his death. But we have often shown throughout this book that David saw in the temple, in the Holy of holies, in the Ark and Cherubim, in the altar and sacrifices, more than mere types and shadows—that he saw in every one of them the great Antitype and the plan of salvation to be accomplished by him through his sufferings and bloodshed, his death and resurrection.

In Ps. lxxviii., we have a glorious description of the goodness and mercy of God towards Israel, and of what he had done for them temporally and spiritually since He brought them out of the bondage of Egypt, to the time of David; and also of what the latter saw that the Lord would still do for them. In it the history of Ark and Cherubim, as relative to their hitherto unsettled state, is narrated—their representation and destiny in the temple to be built is shown—Jehovah's choice of Mount Zion above all other mountains, to place His glory there, is made known—and the mystery of the sufferings of Christ, and their glorious results, are exhibited. The majestic splendour of this Psalm is incomparable, and the rich Messianic prophecies which it contains will be seen in our exposition of the same.

PS. LXVIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXX.

"To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A VOCAL SONG OF PRAISE, COMPOSED BY DAVID.

1. God shall arise, His enemies shall be scattered,
And those that hate Him shall flee before Him.

In Num. x. 35, we are told, that when the Ark set forward before

Israel, Moses said, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee." Hence commentators erroneously imagine, that this Psalm must have been composed for the field of battle, when the Ark marched before the Israelitish army. But they should pay more attention to the subject, and see the difference between the two passages. Moses said קִמָּה יְהוָה (Kumah Jehovah), "Rise up, O Jehovah," in the form of prayer. On the other hand, David, in our Psalm, says, in the form of prophecy, יָקֻם אֱלֹהִים (Yakum Elohim), "God shall arise." Now in the wilderness, the Ark and Cherubim always marched before Israel to search out a resting place for them. As the Shechinah dwelt between the Cherubim, the Ark was styled the God of Israel (i.e., Representative), and when it moved forward, Moses said, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered," &c. Had it been the case when David composed this Psalm, that the Ark went before Israel's army, the language which Moses used in the shape of prayer could by no means have been changed. But he here speaks as a prophet after the revelation made to him regarding the site of the temple on Moriah, whither the Ark was to be taken, and in which it was to be deposited. But as we have observed in the preceding Psalm, that the inspired Psalmist saw in all these movements a progressive development of the plan of salvation, and of the manifestation of Messiah the great Antitype, who was to go before His people and to search out the real and eternal resting place for them, so he uses the words of Moses for future glory: "God shall arise (Himself), His enemies shall be scattered; and those that hate Him shall flee before Him." With great propriety, therefore, the early Christian expositors have applied this verse to the resurrection of Christ, when He rose victorious from the dead, and scattered His enemies, and when those that hated Him fled from before Him.

2. Like the vanishing away of the driven smoke,
Like the melting of wax before the fire—
So shall the wicked perish at the presence of God.
3. But the righteous shall rejoice, exulting before God;
And they shall shout in their gladness.
4. O sing unto God, chaunt His name:
Cast up a high way for Him who rode through the desert
By His name JAH; and exult before Him.
5. A Father of the fatherless, and the Advocate of the widow's
cause,
Is God in His holy habitation.
6. God maketh the beloved to dwell in the house;
He releaseth those that are bound in chains:
But the rebels remained in the parched land.

In verse 4 the Psalmist begins to describe the goodness and mercy of God who revealed himself to Israel in Egypt, at the Red Sea, at Sinai, and in the wilderness, by His name JAH or Jehovah, while unto the Patriarchs He was only known as God Almighty (see Exod. vi. 3, and compare our publication on the types of the law in reference to this subject.) It was to Israel that God revealed himself as the fulfiller of the promises in Jesus

Christ, who is Jehovah as the Angel of the covenant, in whom is Jehovah's name (see Exod. xxiii. 21), and in whom alone Jehovah's promises are made yea and amen; but unto the Patriarchs He revealed himself as the Giver of the promises only by the name **אֱלֹהֵי שָׁדַי** (El Shadai), "God Almighty."

This Angel of the covenant rode through the desert before Israel in the pillar of cloud and of fire, and was known to them by His name JAH, an abbreviation of the name Jehovah. In verse 6 he says, "God maketh the beloved, or the darlings"—i.e. His beloved people Israel, His first-born people from all the nations of the earth, even Israel, whom he released from the chains of Egypt, "dwell in the house;" in His house, as Moses said in his song, "In thy mercy hast thou led forth the people whom thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation" (Exod. xv. 13). Inasmuch as they were surrounded by the pillar of fire and cloud where the covenant Angel dwelt, Israel may be said to have dwelt in the house of God in the wilderness, and much more so in the land of promise, while the rebels among them concerning whom the Lord had sworn in His wrath that they should not enter His rest, but that their carcasses would fall in the wilderness, remained in the parched land.

7. O God, when Thou wentest forth before Thy people,
When Thou didst march through the wilderness, Selah, always;
8. The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of
God,
Even Sinai shook at the presence of God, the God of Israel.
9. A shower of free-gifts didst Thou stretch forth, O God :
Thine inheritance, and the weary one, Thou didst establish.
10. Thy troops dwelt therein : In Thy goodness, O God,
Thou hast provided it for the poor.

The Selah in the 7th verse refers to the first clause of it, i.e. that Jehovah went always before his people in the wilderness; and we do not think that the Selah can here be intended for a pause in any way. After having described in verses 7 and 8 the splendour by which Jehovah's presence was accompanied, he turns in verse 9 to speak of his goodness toward His people. "A shower of free gifts," refers not only to the manna which the Lord rained upon Israel, but also to the innumerable spiritual mercies which He bestowed on them, especially in the giving of the law at Sinai—in the building of the tabernacle, and Ark and Cherubim, and in placing his Shechinah in the midst of them. In the second clause, the shower of mercies, or of free-gifts, is described as consisting in the fact, that **נָחֳלֹתָהָ**

(Nachlothecha) "Thine inheritance, **וְנִילָהָ** (Venilah), "and the weary one (femin.) Thou didst establish." That these are two different subjects may be learned from the **וְ** of "Venilah." Mount Zion was called, "the mountain of Jehovah's inheritance" (see Exod. xv. 17), because there stood His temple, and His altar, where sacrifices and the prayers of the saints were offered unto Him. Thus we see that by "Thine inheritance," the tabernacle in the wilderness, Ark and Cherubim, and altar, must be meant, and that "Nilah," "the weary one," must mean the church, which indeed was both faint and weary in those days. But Jehovah established both

His wearied church and His sanctuary in the midst of her. Therefore, says the Psalmist in verse 10, "Jehovah's troops dwelt therein," *i.e.* in His sanctuary, His holy habitation. "The troops," primarily means the Cherubim, not those of the Ark, but those embroidered on the curtains and veil, and which Cherubim in the sanctuary represented the angels and the souls of the saints in the Father's mansions above. But a dwelling in Jehovah's sanctuary is also for the people of God, as David prayed to dwell in His house all the days of his life, as the affections of the souls of the saints rest, as it were, always there. Though Jehovah's sanctuary was only in the midst of Israel's camp in the wilderness, still it may be said that Israel dwelt in it in their sacrifices and prayers, and in their affection for it, and because the Lord surrounded them with the pillar of cloud and fire by day and by night. So Moses in his song, "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast appointed for Thee to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thine hands have established." Exod. xv. 17. All this, says David, has the Lord provided for the poor—the poor of whom the Psalmist so often speaks, *i.e.* the poor in spirit; to revive and refresh the souls of the humble and contrite ones. The Psalmist now proceeds to speak of the temple which was to be built by his son, and for which he was now making preparation, and the pattern of which, and of all its utensils, was given to him by the Spirit. (See 1 Chron. xxviii. 12.)

11. Jehovah gave a promise, which foretells great triumphs.

אָמַר (Omer) means a "speech containing a promise," as Ps. lxxvii. chron. xvii. 8, "Doth his promise fail for evermore?" When in the plural it is אִמְרוֹת (Imroth) "promises" (femin.) as in Ps. xii., chron. Ps. xxiii. 6, "The promises of Jehovah are pure promises," &c. But inasmuch as a speech, or promise, is composed of more or fewer words and branches, it is sometimes preceded or followed by a plural verb, as הַמְבַּשְׂרוֹת (Hamvasroth, "which foretell," *i.e.* which branches of the promise foretell, great triumphs, or many glorious things. The promise here refers to that made to David, that his son should build the temple—that he should be a glorious monarch—and that Israel should enjoy prosperity and peace under him.

12. The princes of Zebaoth shall flicker, shall flicker, But she that resideth within the house shall divide the spoil.

Here David describes the outer temple, the walls and veils of which were filled with engraved, carved, and embroidered Cherubim. These were shaped as if in an active attitude with their expanded wings, as if ready for flight, representing the ministering spirits in the heavenly sanctuary, who are always in readiness to obey the behests of Jehovah their Master. Thus David says, "The princes of Zebaoth, or of the heavenly hosts (whom the Cherubim in the temple represented), shall flicker, or skip, *i.e.* be shaped as if ready for action. But as these represent only ministering servants, he says further, "But She (the Shechinah, which is femin. in the Hebrew language) that resideth within the house (in the holiest of all) shall divide

the spoil," i.e. all glory is intended for Jehovah the Master of the house, who resideth in the inner sanctuary between the Cherubim.

13. When they shall rest between the borders,
The dove's wings shall be covered with silver,
And her feathers with pure verdant gold.

Till now the Ark and Cherubim and Shechinah had no fixed resting spot, but were moved from place to place, and suffered as it were by the convulsions of the times. But in Solomon's temple two colossal Cherubs were made of olive wood, and covered with the purest gold, their wings were expanded over the whole breadth of the Most Holy, and under them the Ark and Cherubim made by Moses were placed for perpetual rest, never to be removed. Thus the Psalmist says, "When they shall rest between the borders," or, between the extremities of the Cherubs in the Most Holy, "the dove's wings shall be covered with silver, and her feathers with pure verdant gold." These colossal Cherubs were either in the shape of doves, as their features must have differed from these Cherubim of the Ark, or he calls the Shechinah "the dove" (which is very probable), and represents the wings under which she rested, as if they were her own wings. (See 2 Chron. ii. 10—14, v. 7—10.) The latter idea is supported by the next verse, in which he contrasts the peaceful and glorious position of the Dove under the golden wings of the Cherubs with her former position on Mount Salmon, in Shechem, where the snow covered the tabernacle wherein she rested in the days of Joshua.

14. When the Almighty scattered kings,
The snow fell on Her on Tzalmon.

In the time of Joshua, when the Almighty scattered the kings of Canaan before Israel, and overthrew the thrones of mighty princes, the tabernacle stood in Shechem, which lay at the foot of the ridge of mountains called Salmon, or Tzalmon. (See Judges ix. 48, 49.) There the snow fell, and covered the tabernacle wherein she, the Shechinah, dwelt; but now a magnificent structure was to be reared, as a fixed "habitation for the God of Jacob," and the Shechinah was to dwell under the golden wings of the Cherubim. The Psalmist now goes on to show the honour which the Lord had conferred on Mount Zion above all other mountains, though they might be higher and more splendid, in that He chose it for His habitation.

15. Mount Bashan too, is a mountain of God—
A mountain of high summits is Mount Bashan.
16. But why are ye jealous, O ye elevated mountains?
Here is the mountain which God chose for His dwelling:
Here Jehovah shall dwell for ever.
17. The chariots of God are many thousands of thousands,
And thousands of angels, among whom the
Lord appeared on Sinai in His holiness.

During the time of Israel's battles with Sihon and Og, and with the

giants of Bashan, the tabernacle was placed on Mount Bashan as soon as they got possession of it. Thus the Psalmist says, True, Bashan is also a high and elevated mountain on which God once dwelt, but all the claims of the elevated mountains must now be in vain, for He has made choice of Mount Zion, and here He shall dwell for ever. In verse 17 the splendour and majesty in which God appeared on Sinai is described. Many thousands of chariots formed His retinue, and thousands of שְׁנַנִּים (Shinanim) "tranquil or happy beings" (another name for angels well known among the Hebrews; sometimes when used with a numerical word it is "Shinan," as in our Psalm.) That Jehovah was accompanied by His ministering servants, these heavenly beings, when He came down on Mount Sinai, is testified by Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 2), and often in the New Testament (Acts vii. 53; Gal. iii. 19; Heb. ii. 2); and often we hear the metaphor used of chariots of fire at the appearance of the Almighty God. But the Psalmist now drops the splendour of the types, and enters on the great mystery of the plan of salvation by Jesus, who was to ascend into heaven with the same splendour with which He once descended on Sinai, having accomplished a greater work than that of giving the law.

18. Thou hast ascended on high; Thou hast led captivity captive:
Thou hast received gifts in men;
And even rebels, to make them dwell with God JAH.

As it is common for the prophets to speak of a thing which is yet future in the past or present tense, from the certainty of its being accomplished, so David here speaks of the triumphant ascension of Christ as if it had already taken place; "Thou hast ascended on high; Thou hast led captivity captive." But captivity here is used in another than the usual sense, for Jesus delivered the captives of Satan, who would have led them to hell, and snatched them as brands out of the fire, and led them towards heaven, the place of eternal joy and unceasing happiness. "Thou hast received gifts in men." This is the literal meaning of the Hebrew text, and what else has Jesus received for the anguish of His soul but men? "When His soul shall make an offering for sin, He shall see His seed." (Isai. liii. 10.) Again, "Thy people shall freely offer themselves in Thy victorious day," (Ps. cx., chronologically Ps. lxxxvi. 3.) Though Jesus paid a dear price for the souls of men, still they are called his gifts, as He said himself, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me;" again, "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them me." (John xvii. 11, 6.) But at the same time it must be understood, that in the very act of Jesus receiving the souls of his children as gifts, gifts are bestowed on them; and therefore when we say that He received gifts in men, it is implied that He bestows gifts upon men, salvation, peace, and eternal joy. In this sense the passage is used by Paul. (Eph. iv. 8.) The Psalmist then adds, that the captivity which Jesus led to heaven consists also of such as were rebels, not knowing the things that belong to their salvation,—even such He did not reject, but redeemed, sanctified, and washed them with His own blood, and took them up to make them dwell with Jah God, even with himself in his glory; "Father, I will, that they also whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory," &c. (John xvii. 24.)

In the succeeding verse David declares that the work of salvation was not closed on the day when Jesus ascended toward heaven with those souls which were given unto him while on earth, but that the work is still going on, and souls are daily redeemed and sanctified, and ascend to heaven, when their pilgrimage is over.

19. Blessed be the Lord who day by day loadeth us :
For he is our salvation, Selah, continually.

The door of repentance and salvation was not shut up with the ascension of Christ ; no, He is an eternal Saviour, He is our salvation continually. He waits still in his sanctuary for the conversion of rebellious men to make them joint heirs with himself of his own glory, and such as are saved are daily carried in the chariots of His salvation to eternal rest.

But David now enters into the mysterious power of the cross, through death, on which Christ was made a perfect Saviour, and received power to lead captivity captive, to conquer Satan and death, and to triumph over all the powers of darkness.

20. Is that God unto us a God of salvation ?
And yet shall Jehovah the Lord be brought forth to die ?
21. Ah ! surely, God shall wound the head of his enemies,
Even the hairy scalp that persisteth in his rebellion.

After having described the great salvation of souls to be accomplished by Jesus, the Psalmist, in great surprise, as it were, turns his eyes to Golgotha, and contemplates with awe the astonishing price which the Lord JAH was to pay for these souls before He could become their Redeemer. "Is that God unto us a God of salvation?"—is it by Him that our souls must be redeemed from going down into the pit?—is He to deliver us from eternal death? The strictly literal rendering of *וְלִיהוָה אֲדֹנָי לָמוֹת תּוֹצְאוֹת* (Velah Jehovah Adonai Lamaveth Totzaoth) is, "And are there draggings forth unto death for Jehovah the Lord?" i.e. Is there such a thing for him—is He who is our salvation?—is the omnipotent Adonai to be dragged forth to a place of execution and die in agonies on the cross? Overwhelming mystery! awful truth! But the Psalmist soon solves the mystery by showing the glorious and blessed results. Ah! wonderful though it be, it is a blessed fact, that by an eternal covenant the Messiah is to suffer these things, for thereby He will spoil the principalities and powers of darkness ; yea, "He shall wound or bruise the head of His enemies," i.e. Satan, who is the head or prince of the enemies of Jesus and of light ; "even the hairy scalp" (another name for Satan : it is used also to denote an old irreclaimable sinner) "that persisteth in his rebellion," or in "his trespasses."

22. Jehovah said, I will return from Bashan ;
I will return from the depth of the sea :
23. That thy feet may be dipped in the blood
of the tongues of thy dog-like enemies.

When the prophet Isaiah calls upon the Lord to plead His own cause, he says, "Awake! awake! put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in the ancient days, . . . art thou not it that hath cut Rahab and wounded the dragon? Art thou not it that hath dried the sea . . . and made a way in the deep that the redeemed might pass over?" (Isa. li. 9, 10.) So in our Psalm, when the Lord is represented as avenging Himself on His enemies and redeeming His own children, He says, "I will return from Bashan," *i.e.* I am the same God who destroyed the mighty giants of Bashan before Israel; "I will return from the depth of the sea," *i.e.* I am the same God who dried up the mighty waters of the deep to let Israel pass over, while I destroyed the Egyptians and made them a watery grave. Mine arm is not shortened; I will come again for salvation with mine anointed, destroy all His enemies, and save my children. On the expression, "dog-like enemies," compare Psalm xxii. 16, where the Messiah utters the complaint, "For dogs have compassed me," &c.

David now proceeds to show how the enemies of God, who witnessed or had heard of His glorious manifestation at the Red Sea, and at Sinai, remain without any excuse for their sin.

24. They have seen Thy processions, O Lord,
Even the processions of my God and King in His holiness.
25. When the singers went foremost, then followed the minstrels;
In the middle the virgins with their timbrels.
26. In the great congregations have they blessed God:
Israel blessed God from the very fountain of their heart.
27. There the young Benjamin became a ruler;
The princes of Judah and their myriads,
The princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali.
28. This thy strength, thy God hath commanded:
Triumph, O God: all this hast Thou wrought for us.
29. Because of Thy temple at Jerusalem,
Kings shall bring presents unto Thee.

In verses 24—27 inclusive Israel's joyous procession is described, when Moses sang his sublime song at the Red Sea, and when Miriam the prophetess went forth at the head of the daughters of Israel with timbrels and dances, and praised and adored the great God of their salvation, who had raised them at once from abject slavery in Egypt to the condition of a free and mighty nation with princes and rulers. In verse 28 the Psalmist confesses that all the glory belonged to God; and in the second clause he addresses Jesus, "Triumph, O Lord (in thy great undertaking); all this hast Thou wrought for us,"—as Thou hast been able to achieve in our behalf such mighty deliverances from, and triumphs over, temporal enemies, so shalt Thou triumph over the spiritual enemies, and achieve our salvation for us. In verse 29 the glory of the temple that was to be built at Jerusalem, and the blissful results of the fulfilment of the promises connected with it, are described: kings would be brought by it to pay homage to the Lord of the temple.

30. Rebuke the beasts of the forest,
Both the assembly of bulls, along with the calves of the nations;

O Thou who didst trample upon the hirelings for silver,
Scatter the nations who delight in war.

The enemies of God and His Christ are often compared in Scripture to wild beasts, as in Ps. xxii. the assembly of the wicked who pierced the Lamb of God, are called "bulls of Bashan," or, even "dogs." In like manner David here prays that the Lord would rebuke the enemies of the Messiah, whether Jewish or heathen, styling them the beasts of the forest, the assembly of bulls, and the calves of nations." In David's wars it often occurred that the nations with which he went to fight, hired other nations for silver, as was the case, for instance, both with Syria and Philistia. But the God who went along with Israel's hosts, trampled upon the hirelings along with the enemy that hired them; and thus David says מִתְרַפֵּס (Mithrapes), "Thou who didst, or who art wont to, trample בְּרִצְיָהּ-כָּכָה (Beratzei-Chasseph). upon the hirelings for silver," or upon those who are allied (to fight) for silver, do Thou also "scatter the nations who delight in war;" scatter Thou the enemies of the Messiah. Then follow the blessed results of Messiah's victory, viz. the conversion of the Gentiles.

31. The fat ones shall come from Egypt;
Cush shall eagerly stretch forth his hands to God.
32. O ye kingdoms of the earth, sing unto God:
Sing praises unto the Lord, Selah, continually.
33. O sing to Him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens from
of old:
For, behold, He shall send forth His voice with a mighty sound.
34. Ascribe ye Omnipotence to God,
Who is proud over Israel,
Though His glorious splendour is displayed in the skies.
35. O God, Thou art terrible out of Thy sanctuary:
It is the God of Israel who giveth strength
And firmness to a nation. Blessed be God.

We have reserved Psalm xxix. to place it as an appendix to the foregoing magnificent song, not because of any historical connection, but because of its grandeur, and because of a similarity between some of the expressions in both. The reader will see the resemblance alluded to by comparing verses 1, 2, and 9 of the following with the last four verses of the preceding Psalm. The last verse especially of the following seems to point to the promised glory of Israel during the time of Solomon, and the peace which they would enjoy under that monarch; all which was typical of Messiah's kingdom, and of the peace, and glory, and prosperity of His people.

PS. XXIX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXI.

A SONG OF PRAISE BY DAVID.

1. O render unto Jehovah ye sons of the mighty—
Render unto Jehovah, glory and power.

2. Render unto Jehovah the glory of His name ;
Worship Jehovah in holy ornaments.
3. Jehovah's voice is upon the waters: The God of glory thundereth :
Jehovah is upon the mighty waters.
4. Jehovah's voice is powerful ; Jehovah's voice is full of majesty.
5. Jehovah's voice breaketh the cedars ;
Yea, Jehovah breaketh the cedars of Lebanon :
6. And He maketh them skip like a calf ;
Even Lebanon, and Sirion, like a young unicorn.
7. Jehovah's voice scattereth flames of fire.
8. Jehovah's voice shaketh the wilderness ;
Jehovah shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.
9. Jehovah's voice maketh the hinds to cast their young,
And maketh bare the forest, (*i.e.* by stripping it of its trees.)
In His temple also, every one declareth His glory.
10. Jehovah hath caused the waters of the deluge to retire ;
Yea, Jehovah is enthroned as the everlasting King.
11. Jehovah shall grant strength to His people ;
Jehovah shall bless His people with peace.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIFTEEN PSALMS OF DEGREES.

Each respectively of this beautiful group of Psalms, beginning with the cxx. and ending with the cxxxiv., bears the title of שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת (Shir Hamaaloth), "A vocal song of the Degrees," or the Steps. The reason why they are so called is, because they were composed by David on his life in its different successive degrees of progress. Having been early taken from his employment as a shepherd, or, as Scripture calls it, from "following the flocks" of his father at Bethlehem, and to his devout astonishment anointed and appointed by the great Shepherd of Israel to feed Jacob, the inheritance and chosen people of God ; and the steps by which he was brought to the throne having been so mysterious, and indeed his whole life so eventful, and so illustrative of the leadings of Divine providence—David was led by the Spirit to compose these valuable biographical sketches, which are fraught with important lessons to the Church in all succeeding ages. Each of them by itself having reference to a particular time and event in his life, and containing the description of a degree or step towards the fulfilment of the promises made to him, he composed them separately, and then combined them in one whole. But besides his own individual deliverances and steps of progress, these songs include also those of Israel, his flock, under his flourishing dominion. Hence they were sung by the happy Israelites on their pilgrimage to Zion three times in the year, and the rejoicing bands made every valley of Judea resound with them as they journeyed along, and with them on their lips they entered the city of the living God. They were also used on the occasion of Israel's chief joy, the Feast of Tabernacles at the *pouring of waters* (John vii. 37, 38 ; Isai. xii. 3), when they ascended from the brook by the steps with

pitchers of water in their hands, to pour out, as a symbol of prosperity and blessings.

The Degree Psalms, like all the others, have been confused and misplaced, and the collector of the sacred writings was obliged to insert them just as he found them. (On this subject, see Introduction, page 24.) Our first object, therefore, must be to rearrange them according to the different periods of David's life to which they refer, and according to the degrees of his prosperity, and in him, of Israel's also, which they celebrate. They will each be introduced by a brief remark or two, stating the part of David's history to which the song specially alludes, and the degree in his life which it commemorates. References will also be made to those of the Psalms which have been treated in this book along with the history and illustrated by it, which stand in close connection with the Degree Psalms, inasmuch as they bear on the same subject. It will therefore be requisite for the reader to consult those relative Psalms or parts of the history, in order to find the illustration at large of the Degree Psalm which alludes to some particular subject or event that has been already treated of, but to repeat which here would be obviously out of place. We have not placed these Degree Psalms in their chronological order, because we are persuaded that they were intended by David to stand by themselves, and to form together, as it were, a short biographical account of the steps by which God had advanced him from one degree of power and glory to another, according to the promises which were made to him by Samuel and Nathan the prophets, and to be a brief recapitulation of the substance of his Psalms and of his eventful history; and that he did this for the special benefit of Israel, as Moses did in the Book of Deuteronomy, and in his glorious song recorded in the xxxii. chapter of that book.

The first of these Psalms seems to be the cxxi., which forms the second Degree Psalm in the common order. It commemorates the thoughts of the newly-anointed shepherd, David, after he returned to his flock, and in overwhelming astonishment reflected on what Samuel had done and communicated to him, and on the vast difficulties which seemed to lie in the way of the fulfilment of the promise that he should be king, seeing that Saul, the powerful and cruel monarch, must first be removed; and how was this to be accomplished? This Psalm will be best illustrated by comparing it with the exposition of the xxiii., which is the i. in this book.

PS. CXXI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXII.

A VOCAL SONG FOR THE DEGREES.

[No. 1.]

1. I lifted up mine eyes unto the hills :
From whence shall my assistance come ?
2. My assistance shall come from Jehovah,
The Creator of heaven and earth.
3. He shall not suffer thy foot to slip.—
Thy Preserver slumbereth not.

4. Behold, the Preserver of Israel
Doth neither slumber nor sleep.
5. Jehovah is thy Preserver;
Jehovah is thy Protector: He is at thy right hand.
6. By day the sun shall not smite thee,
Nor the moon by night.
7. Jehovah shall preserve thee from all evil;
He shall preserve thy soul.
8. Jehovah shall watch thy going out and coming in,
From henceforth and for evermore.*

The next Psalm is the cxx., and refers to the persecutions which David endured under Saul. It is particularly descriptive of the slanders and calumnies to which he was exposed from wicked men—of his wanderings in the deserts, and his dwelling in caves and tents—and of the quarrelsome disposition of his enemies, as well as of the wicked men in his own band. References to Psalms will be given in the foot-note.

PS. CXX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXIII.

A VOCAL SONG OF DEGREES.

[No. 2.]

1. Unto Jehovah in my distress I called,
And He answered me.
2. "O Jehovah, deliver my soul from lying lips,
From the deceitful tongue."

* That this is the first of the Degree Psalms is proved, not only by internal evidence (as the reader will see from the preface to these Psalms, and especially from comparing this one with the exposition of the xxiii., in this book the i.), but also by the title, which differs from the other fourteen. This Psalm has in the title שִׁיר לַמַּעֲלוֹת (Shir Lamaaloth), "A vocal song for the Degrees," or "Constructed in Degrees," as the chief title for all the Degree Psalms; while the other fourteen have in their titles שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת (Shir Hamaaloth), "A song of the Degree Songs," i.e. a part of the fifteen Degree Psalms. "I lifted up mine eyes unto the hills:" This figure is taken from Israel's experience. When their country was attacked by a heathen host, the king sent messengers throughout the country to blow the trumpet of war, and to tell Israel of the place where they should assemble, which was always in some quiet central valley, in order to avoid being attacked before the whole force should come together. To this valley the king, or the chief general, first repaired with his ready troops, and there he waited in eager anxiety for his auxiliaries, always lifting his eyes to the hills around to see whether those from Gilead were coming, or those from Ephraim, or those from Judah, so as to be able to go forth and attack the enemy. David, the anointed Shepherd of Bethlehem, lying in the valley beside his flock, and contemplating the difficulties lying in his way before the promises made to him could be fulfilled, represents himself as looking up to the hills around him whence his auxiliaries would come. Gilead, Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim, were all Saul's subjects—no aid could be expected from them; but he found out who would come to his assistance, even the omnipotent God of his promises, the Preserver of Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps. Verse 6 is quite expressive of the pastoral life, exposure to the heat of the sun by day, and to the cold by night. But the reader, as has been already stated, will derive farther satisfaction by comparing this Psalm with the exposition of the xxiii., chronologically the i.

3. What will be given unto thee?
Or what profit wilt thou have? O deceitful tongue!
4. The arrows of the mighty are sharp,
Like the coals of juniper.
5. Woe is me! that I wandered about like Mesech;
That I dwelt in the tents of Kedar.
6. Long hath my soul dwelt with the haters of peace.
7. I was indeed for peace;
But when I spake, they were for war.*

The third of the Degree Psalms is that which numbers in the common order cxxiii. It recalls to mind the prayers offered by David, as well as by all those of Israel who groaned under the tyrannical government of Saul. From the fact that it refers to the nation, as well as to David personally, the singular and plural tenses are both used in it.

PS. CXXIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXIV.

A VOCAL SONG OF DEGREES.

[No. 3.]

1. Unto Thee have I lifted up mine eyes,
O Thou who dwellest in the heavens.
2. Behold, as the eyes of servants are directed to the hand of their lords,
As the eyes of a maiden to the hand of her mistress;
So were our eyes directed to Jehovah our God,
Until He have mercy upon us.
3. Be gracious, O Jehovah, be gracious unto us:
For we are exceedingly filled with contempt.
4. O how greatly was our soul filled with the scorn of the arrogant!
With the contempt of the proud! †

* Doeg, the Edomite, is the person chiefly referred to in this Psalm, and the reader will find the whole illustrated by comparing it with the lii., in this book the xix., which was composed when Doeg accused David and the priests of Nob. Verse 5 refers to his wanderings in the deserts, &c., like Mesech and Kedar, two wandering Arabian tribes. The "woe is me!" at the beginning of the verse is an exclamation of terror at the recollection of the miseries to which he was exposed during these his wanderings. Verses 6 and 7 refer to Saul, when he contrived to send David on warlike expeditions in which he hoped he might be destroyed. (Compare Psalm cxl., in this book ix. and exposition, which will best illustrate this part of the Psalm, also 1 Sam. xxx. 22—24, which latter passage not only shows that there were plenty of peace-disturbers even in David's own band, but evinces also his own calm disposition, and his love of justice and peace.

† An extended illustration of this short but noble Psalm will be found in almost all the Psalms composed by David under Saul's persecution of him, more especially in those written after the terrible slaughter of the priests of Nob. Verse 2 refers to the eager and submissive anxiety with which the man-slave, or the maiden, looks to the hand of their master or mistress for a letter of liberty (comp. Psalm cxvi., in this book, lxx. 16. and exposition). So the children of God, when in distress, look eagerly, submissively, and with holy patience, to Him, for He alone can deliver them, and loose the bonds of their sufferings.

The fourth Psalm of Degrees is the cxxiv., and celebrates the answer to Israel's prayers, and their deliverance from the tyrannical power of which the preceding Psalm treats.

PS. CXXIV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXV.

A VOCAL SONG OF DEGREES.

[No. 4.]

1. O had not Jehovah been on our side !
Let Israel now exclaim :
2. O had not Jehovah been on our side,
When man rose up against us :
3. Then they would certainly have swallowed us alive,
When their wrath was kindled against us :
4. Then the waters had swept us off—
Then the stream had passed over our souls ;
5. Yea, then the mischievous waters had passed over our souls.
6. Blessed be Jehovah, who hath not abandoned us as prey to their
teeth.
7. Our soul escaped as a bird from the fowler's trap :
The trap was broken, and we have escaped.
8. Our help is in the name of Jehovah,
The Creator of heavens and earth.*

The next in order seems to be that which numbers cxxxi. in the common version. It represents David's meekness, his confidence in the Lord's promises, and his patient waiting for the fulfilment of the same, during the opposition of the house of Saul and of the eleven tribes, when he was king over Judah at Hebron.

PS. CXXXI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXXVI.

A VOCAL SONG OF DEGREES BY DAVID.

[No. 5.]

1. O Jehovah, my heart was not haughty,
Mine eyes were not lifted up:
Neither have I cherished great aspirations,
Nor wonderful things that were above my stage.

* The reader will find a lengthened explanation and illustration of this Psalm in the exposition of Psalm xxvii., in this book the lxiv. He is specially requested to compare the first verse of our Psalm with the parallel exclamation in verse 13th of the one referred to, and exposition, as well as the footnote there.

2. O, have I not restrained and quieted my soul,
Like a child that is weaned from his mother ?
Yea, like a weaned child was my soul to me.
3. O let Israel wait patiently for Jehovah,
Even henceforth, and for evermore.*

The next song seems to be the cxxxiii. in the common order. It refers to the time when the eleven opposing tribes submitted themselves to David, and when Zion was established as the royal residence, and became the centre both of political and ecclesiastical affairs.

PS. CXXXIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXVII.

A VOCAL SONG OF DEGREES BY DAVID.

[No. 6.]

1. Behold how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity !
2. It is like precious oil on the head,
Which flowed down upon the beard, even the beard of Aaron,
And which flowed down even to the skirts of his garments.
3. It is like the dew of Hermon,
Which descendeth upon the mountains of Zion :
For there hath Jehovah commanded the blessing,
Even life for evermore.†

The next is the cxxvi. in the common order. It relates to the time

* What a glorious and blessed lesson this for us ! to restrain and quiet our natural passions—to check and crucify the desires of the flesh—to think meanly of ourselves—and not to aspire after things which are beyond us, which, alas ! often proves the ruin of precious souls. Let us imitate the example of the holy Psalmist, and respond to his call to wait patiently for Jehovah, and for Him alone. Let us strive to be as weaned children, weaned from the mountains of vanity and the follies of this world. Let us ever contemplate Him who was infinitely rich, but who for our sakes became so poor as not to have had where to lay his head. Let us wait patiently for Jehovah, even henceforth and for evermore.

† The blessed results of the union of all the tribes of Israel under the sceptre of Jehovah's appointed King, are beautifully described in this Psalm. Israel is regarded as one body by means of the union : Zion's blessings, proceeding from Jehovah's sanctuary, and diffused over the whole nation, are compared to the precious oil which was poured in abundance on Aaron's head, when he was anointed high priest by Moses, and which flowed down on the beard, and thence to the very skirts of his garments. Israel was Jehovah's royal priesthood, and the blessings which He poured on their head (David their King), in Zion his residence, diffused peace and prosperity to the uttermost borders of the land, filling with joy and gladness both great and small. The figure in the second clause of the 3d verse partakes more of fact than figure. Hermon, and its regions Bashan and Carmel, were the most fertile spots in Palestine. Before the union Hermon kept, as it were, his dew (fertility) to himself ; but now he sent his dew, i.e. his first fruits, tithes, and fat lambs for sacrifices to Zion, while Zion in return sends thither blessings temporal and spiritual. Hence the Psalmist says, that the dew of Hermon (its rich produce) descends upon the mountains of Zion ; and why ? because "there," in Zion, Jehovah hath commanded, or ordained the blessing, and all the prosperity of Hermon comes from Zion—not temporal merely, but spiritual, even life eternal from that God whose residence is in Zion.

when David subdued all his heathen enemies, and when those Jews who were dispersed and made captive after the fatal battle of Gilboa, came back rejoicing to their native country, and enjoyed prosperity and peace. It also expresses the astonishment of the heathen nations at the extraordinary change which had taken place in so brief a period. Israel, but lately crushed and broken under Philistia, was now not only Philistia's master, but had made Edom, Ammon, Moab, and all the mighty Syrian kings his tributaries. The reader, however, will find this Psalm largely explained in the Introduction, pp. 28—30, where the erroneous opinion that it refers to the Babylonish captivity is also shown. For an explanation of verses 1 and 4, the reader is referred to pp. 147-8 of this book.

PS. CXXVI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXVIII.

A VOCAL SONG OF DEGREES.

[No. 7.]

1. When Jehovah redressed the affliction of Zion,
We were like them that dream.
2. Then was our mouth full of laughter,
And our tongue with songs of triumph :
Then said they among the nations,
" Jehovah hath done great things for them."
3. Yea, Jehovah hath done great things for us,
Therefore it is that we rejoice.
4. O Jehovah, redress Thou our afflictions,
As the rivulets in the south.*
5. They who sow with tears shall reap with joy.
6. He that goeth forth weeping, when bearing the seed-basket,
Shall return with singing, when bearing his sheaves.

4

The next Song of Degrees is the cxxviii. in the common order. In it David shows Israel how the Lord had fulfilled his promises to him, and settled him with his family in peace and prosperity on Mount Zion in his magnificent cedar palace; and exhorts them to fear and love God, for theirs will be a happy portion who do so.

* The south of Palestine is the driest part of that country, and deficient in water-springs (see Judges i. 15), and depends entirely upon the rains of heaven. In a long-continued drought all the rivulets are dried up, and the country looks parched and desolate. So Israel looked when the Lord withdrew his blessing and protection from them; but when He was pleased to redress their afflictions, and heal their backslidings, and bless them, they were soon restored to prosperity and joy, as the rivulets in the south were replenished after a rich and plenteous rain.

PS. CXXVIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXIX.

A VOCAL SONG OF DEGREES.

[No. 8.]

1. Happy is every one that feareth Jehovah—that walketh in His ways.
2. If thou eatest of the labour of thine own hands,
Happy art thou, for it shall be well with thee.
3. Thy wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the apartment of thy house :
Thy children shall be as the olive plants round about thy table.
4. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth Jehovah.
5. Jehovah shall bless thee out of Zion ;
And thou shalt see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.
6. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children.
Peace come upon Israel !

The next in order of these Songs is Psalm cxxv. in the common version, and, like the foregoing, is intended for a lesson to Israel to put their trust in God who dwelleth in Jerusalem.

PS. CXXV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXX.

A VOCAL SONG OF DEGREES.

[No. 9.]

1. They that trust in Jehovah shall be like Mount Zion,
Which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.
2. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,
So is Jehovah round about his people
From henceforth, and for evermore.
3. For the rod of cruelty shall not abide on the lot of the righteous ;
Lest the righteous put forth their hands to iniquity.
4. O Jehovah, do good to those that are good,
And to those that are upright in their hearts.
5. But those who turn aside into their crooked paths,
Jehovah will carry them off along with all evil-doers.
Peace shall be upon Israel.

The next is the cxxix. in the common order. In it Israel triumphs in the contrast between the misery and suffering which they endured under

the Judges, and the reign of Saul, and the peace and prosperity which they enjoyed under David, when all their enemies were subdued before them, and when Zion was gloriously established.

PS. CXXIX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXXI.

A VOCAL SONG OF DEGREES.

[No. 10.]

1. Much have they afflicted me from my early days,
 May Israel now exclaim :
2. Much have they afflicted me from my early days,
 Yet have they not prevailed against me.
3. The plowers plowed upon my back,
 And extended wide their furrows.
4. But the righteous Jehovah
 Hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.
5. Let all the enemies of Zion be ashamed and turned to flight :
6. Let them be as the grass upon the house-tops,
 Which withereth before it can be taken down ;
7. Wherewith the mower cannot fill his hand,
 Nor he who bindeth the sheaves his bosom.
8. Nor do they who pass by say,
 " The blessing of Jehovah be upon you :
 We bless you in the name of Jehovah."

The next, and most magnificent, Song of Degrees is that which numbers in the common order Psalm cxxxii. It commemorates David's resolution not to enter into his cedar palace until a place should be established for the Ark of the Covenant—his proposal to Nathan to build a temple to Jehovah—the ratification of the Covenant entered into with him—and all the glorious promises made to him respecting his temporal posterity, and especially respecting the Messiah, that he should inherit his throne for ever. It includes also the prosperity of Israel under the temporal government of the King of the Covenant in David's descendants, as well as the felicity of spiritual Israel under Messiah's reign.

PS. CXXXII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXXII.

A VOCAL SONG OF DEGREES.

[No. 11.]

1. O Jehovah, remember unto David, all his afflictions :
2. How he swore unto Jehovah—
 How he made a vow unto the Mighty One of Jacob ;

3. I will not come unto the tabernacle of my house—
I will not ascend the couch of my bed,
4. I will not give sleep to mine eyes—
Slumber to mine eyelids ;
5. Until I find out a place for Jehovah—
A habitation for the Mighty One of Jacob.
6. Behold, we have heard of her at Ephratah—
We have found her in the fields of the wood.
7. Let us go now into His tabernacle—
Let us worship at His footstool.
8. Arise, O Jehovah, enter Thy resting place ;
Thou, and the Ark of Thy strength.
9. Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness, -
And let Thy saints shout for joy.
10. For the sake of David Thy servant,
Turn not away the face of Thine anointed.*
11. Jehovah hath sworn to David in truth,
And from which He will not turn ;
Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.
12. If thy children will keep my covenant,
And my testimonies which I shall teach them,
Then shall their children also sit on thy throne for ever.
13. For Jehovah hath chosen Zion ;
He hath desired it for His habitation.
14. This is My resting place for ever :
Here will I dwell, for I have desired her.
15. Her provision will I greatly bless :
Her poor will I satisfy with bread :
16. And her priests will I clothe with salvation ;
And her saints shall shout for joy.
17. There will I make the horn of David to bud :
I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

* In the first five verses David tells his devout love for the Ark of the Lord, and how he resolved not to rest day nor night until he had built a tabernacle for the God of Israel on Zion, which also implies the reorganization of the whole Levitical order, and a re-establishment of the prostrate worship of God. In verse 6, he says, "We have heard of her," *i.e.* of the Ark and Cherubim, "at Ephratah." Ephratah was the ancient name of Bethlehem in Judea, David's native city. There he heard of Ark and Cherubim even in his earliest days, as they stood at Kirjath-jearim, a city belonging to Judah, his tribe. But as soon as he was anointed King over all Israel, and had taken possession of Mount Zion, he allowed himself no rest until, with great solemnity, he had gone with all Israel to Kirjath-jearim (the city of the forests), where he found the Ark (as he calls it in the fields of the forests, *i.e.* in that obscure place), and brought her up with shoutings to Zion, put her into the tabernacle, and arranged the order of priests and Levites to minister before Jehovah. In verse 7, therefore, he invites Israel now to come and avail themselves of the privilege, and worship God there. The Ark, however, was not at all settled as long as she remained in the mere tent, but David received the promise that "Solomon his son should build a temple to Jehovah, and by the time he wrote this Psalm he had also received the revelation as to the exact site of the temple on Moriah. Hence in verse 8, he says, "Arise, O Jehovah, enter Thy resting place ; Thou, and the Ark of Thy strength," *i.e.* when the temple shall be built, take up Thy residence there, and fill it with Thy glory. After having offered up a prayer in verse 9 on behalf of the priests and saints, he also prays for Solomon in verse 10, and not for Solomon only, but for all his royal descendants down to Messiah, the last and heavenly ; and this prayer is grounded on Jehovah's promise as narrated in the succeeding verses.

18. His enemies will I cover with shame :
But upon himself shall his crown ever flourish.

The next Psalm in order we take to be the cxxx. It commemorates David's humble and sincere repentance after his deep fall into sin, and how Jehovah had graciously pardoned him ; closing with a solemn admonition to Israel to put their trust in the merciful and sin-pardoning God.

PS. CXXX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXXIII.

A VOCAL SONG OF DEGREES.

[No. 12.]

1. Out of the depth I cried unto Thee, O Jehovah.
2. Lord, hear my voice ;
Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.
3. If Thou, O Jehovah, shouldest mark iniquity,
O Lord, who shall be able to stand ?
4. But with Thee is forgiveness, that Thou mayest be feared.*
5. I waited for Jehovah, yea, my soul waited,
And I trusted in His word.
6. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than watchmen for the
morning,
Yea, far more than the watchmen for the morning.
7. O let Israel wait patiently for Jehovah ;
For with Jehovah there is tender mercy,
And with him there is plenteousness of redemption.
8. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

The next Song of Degrees is that which numbers cxix. in the common order. In it David declares how great was his joy in the public worship of God which he had ordered in Jerusalem, and how he rejoiced in those

* The criminal who stands at the bar of a judge whose laws are fixed and unalterable, so far from feeling fear or reverence for them, will regard both judge and laws with hardened indifference, or with indignation. His fear will arise from the prospect of the punishment which the judge must award him in terms of the unreasonable and tyrannical laws (as he will think them), and he will sink in despair. But that judge will be feared and held in reverence by the criminal, who, for good and wise reasons, has the law at his disposal, and life and death in his power. So it is with respect to God : Had no satisfaction been made for the violation of His unalterable law, sinners would hate Him and hate His law, while they trembled at their doom. They would tremble with impotent rage, like the devils, who believe and tremble, but do not fear with reverence. But now that there is forgiveness with God, and He can pardon or not, kill or give life, wound or heal—there is a reverential fear of Him. He is feared and adored, and the fear is no longer a trembling at his unchangeable law, but a fear of incurring His displeasure ; “ For with Thee is forgiveness, or pardon of sin, that Thou mayest be feared.”

who went to worship in God's house. He also describes the glory of Jerusalem, the city of God, whither the tribes repaired to praise Him after the Ark and altar were set there. The thrones for judgment in verse 5 must not be mistaken for kingly thrones, for the expression means simply that the princes, David's sons, sat on thrones of judgment to judge matters of law for Israel, as auxiliaries to their father. (See 2 Sam. viii. 18.) David then concludes by wishing peace and prosperity to Zion, admonishing every one to seek and promote the same, and gives the reason for it, viz., because of the Lord's house, and of the precious spiritual benefits it confers upon the people of God.

PS. CXXII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXXIV.

A VOCAL SONG OF DEGREES BY DAVID.

[No. 13.]

1. I rejoiced with those who said unto me,
Let us go up to the house of Jehovah.
2. Our feet were standing in thy gates, O Jerusalem.*
3. Jerusalem, thou art builded like a city
Whose structures were reared on one united plan :
4. Thither the tribes repaired—the tribes of Jehovah,
As a testimony for Israel to praise the name of Jehovah.
5. For there were set thrones for judgment,
Even thrones for the house of David.
6. O pray for the peace of Jerusalem :
May those prosper who do love thee.
7. Peace be within thy walls—prosperity in thy palaces.
8. For the sake of my brethren and companions,
I will now say, Peace be within thee.
9. Because of the house of Jehovah our God,
I will endeavour to promote thy prosperity.

* עמדו חיי (Amdoth Hayu) never means "shall stand," as the common version has it nor can it, without violence, be rendered "do stand," as some critics wish it; but it is ever in the past tense "did stand," or "were standing." The reason for this is, because David wrote this Psalm near the close of his life, when he was obliged to keep his bed from frailty, and his feet could stand no more in the gates of Jerusalem; but he solemnly remembers the past when he did stand there, along with other happy worshippers. Had critics paid attention to this fact, they would have felt no difficulty, and some of them would not have ascribed the authorship of this Psalm to another than David. Some, for instance, object to this Psalm being his, because the "house of God" is mentioned, which, they say, must refer to Solomon's temple. Others say that the tribes did not go up to visit Jerusalem before the temple was built. But both these objections are false, for wherever the Ark of the Lord stood, and the altar before it where sacrifices were brought, there the house of God was, and Israel visited Jerusalem with their sacrifices and oblations as soon as the Ark was established on Zion, and to this David refers in the past as having already been practised. A more careful study of the Psalms and of the books of Samuel and Chronicles would throw greater light on this subject, and produce the conviction that the scripture "house of God" means something else than mere walls of wood or stone.

The next Song of Degrees is that which is numbered in the common order cxxxiv. It contains an invitation to the priests and Levites, the servants of the sanctuary, never to cease praising God day or night (the word "Behold," at the opening of the Psalm, means "pay attention to your holy duty,") and closes with a benediction pronounced on them by the King in the name of God.

PS. CXXXIV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXXV.

A VOCAL SONG OF DEGREES.

[No. 14.]

1. Behold, bless Jehovah, all ye servants of Jehovah,
Ye who stand in the house of Jehovah by night.
2. Lift up your hands towards the sanctuary, and bless Jehovah.
3. May Jehovah bless thee out of Zion,
Even He who made heaven and earth.

The next and last Song of Degrees is the cxxvii. in the common order. It was composed by David as a lesson for Solomon his successor on the throne. He had amassed a vast amount of silver, and gold, and precious stones, &c., for building the house of God; and in addition to these solemn lessons which he gave to Solomon before his death, as recorded in the Book of Chronicles, he left him this inspired song to show him that all the wealth he would leave him belonged to Jehovah his God, and that if He establish not the temple, and fill it with his glory—that if He watch not over Jerusalem, and be a wall of fire around her, all mere worldly riches and power would dissolve in vanity. At the same time the Psalm contains excellent practical lessons for every one who takes the word of God as his guide.

PS. CXXXVII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXXVI.

A VOCAL SONG OF DEGREES FOR SOLOMON.

[No. 15.]

1. If Jehovah doth not build the house,
The builders thereof labour in vain:
If Jehovah doth not guard a city,
The watchman watcheth in vain.
2. It is vain for you who rise early, who sit till late,
O ye eaters of the bread of trouble:
All this He giveth to His beloved even in sleep.
3. Behold, sons are an heritage of Jehovah,
And the fruit of the womb is a gift.
4. Like arrows in the hand of the mighty man,
So are the sons of youth.

5. Happy is the man who hath filled his quiver with them ;
 They shall not be ashamed when they speak against their ene-
 mies in the gate.*

We now approach the close of David's Psalms and history. In 2 Sam. xii. 24, 25, we are told that Bathshebah bore a son to David whom he called Solomon, and whom Jehovah loved ; " And God sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet, and he called his name Jedidiah because of the Lord," *i.e.* that his name was called Jedidiah (which signifies, the beloved of God) because the Lord loved him. It must have afforded great consolation and joy to King David in his old age to see his successor appointed not by himself, but by God, who had given him the promises of the covenant. The conclusion of his history is narrated so comprehensively and in such an interesting manner, in 1 Chron. xxii.—xxix. that we must refer the reader to these chapters for it. We only quote one passage from his address to the elders of Israel, to the priests and Levites, and to his son Solomon : " Now, therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the Lord, and in the audience of our God : Keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God, that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you for ever. And thou, Solomon, my son, Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind : for the Lord searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts : If thou seek him, he will be found of thee ; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever. Take heed now ; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for a sanctuary : be strong, and do it," &c., xxviii. 8—10. From several expressions in these chapters we learn, that it was by virtue of a special revelation from God that Solomon was chosen to succeed his father on the throne of Israel, and to build Jehovah's sanctuary ; and any attempt therefore to change the succession was not only a rebellion against King David, but against God. All opposition failed, for Solomon sat on the throne even during his father's lifetime, and Jehovah exalted it exceedingly even before his father's eyes.

The aged David contemplated these Divine arrangements with great joy ; and knowing that the line of his successors was to terminate in the spiritual, eternal, and glorious Kingdom of the great Solomon, the Messiah, the Prince of Peace, who was to inherit his throne for ever, he could distinctly see the type and Antitype of Jehovah's covenanted King. Solomon was David's first royal descendant, and he was to build the temporal sanctuary

* All that commentators have been able to make of the last three verses of this Psalm is, that the Psalmist describes the advantage which a man has who is surrounded in his old age by a vigorous progeny of sons, who can support him and plead his cause against enemies—that such sons in a father's house are compared (in verse 4) to the arrows in the hand of a mighty man with which he defends himself against the attack of his foes. But we must humbly confess, that we see neither taste nor connection in the Psalm according to such an exposition ; and that the sublimity of the style and sentiment puts it beyond doubt on our part that under the cloak of the figure employed in these three verses, a deep and magnificent enigma must be hid, and an important doctrine inculcated by the old, experienced, and inspired monarch on his royal son. But we must admit that hitherto we have not been able to solve it, and must therefore leave it, literally translated, to the search and study of more enlightened students of the word of God.

of the Lord, and peace and prosperity were promised to Israel under his reign ; but David saw Christ, the last and eternal successor in his throne, who was to build Jehovah's spiritual sanctuary, and to procure peace for all the families of the earth, and everlasting salvation for redeemed souls.

Psalm lxxii., which was the last prayer offered up by David to the God of his promises, is primarily a prayer for Solomon, that he might enjoy a long, prosperous, and happy reign, but no sooner do we enter into its sentiments than we perceive that Messiah must be the object and subject of it, and that Solomon is but the type. There are no divisions in the Psalm, for from beginning to end, it is a prayer for the King of David's covenant, whose Kingdom began with David, and was to be perpetuated in the Messiah. As David had that King in view, the prayer is general, and although some of its branches might be applicable to David's temporal successors, yet others could only and exclusively refer to the great Prince of Peace, to whom the Creator of the whole earth promised to give the uttermost parts thereof for his possession.

PS. LXXII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXXVII.

[A PRAYER OF DAVID] FOR SOLOMON.

1. O God, give Thy judgments to the King,
And Thy righteousness to the King's son.
2. He shall judge Thy people in righteousness,
And Thine afflicted ones with equity.
3. Mountains of peace shall be brought to the people,
And hills of righteousness.
4. He shall judge the poor of the people,
He shall save the children of the needy,
And He shall crush the oppressor.
5. Thus shall they fear Thee as long as the sun existeth,
And during the appearance of the moon,
Even throughout all generations.

We have often had occasion to observe that the word מִשְׁפָּט (Mishpat), invariably rendered "judgment," very often means "order, arrangement, appointment," &c. In the first verse David prays that Jehovah's appointments may be granted to the King, *i.e.* that the promises made by Jehovah to himself may receive their fulfilment. Thus it will follow that His righteousness, or His benevolent gift or gracious promise—as we have often showed that צֶדֶק (Tzedek) also means—would be granted to the King's son, *i.e.* to the King of the Covenant, who was to be the son of David, beginning with Solomon the type, and ending with the greater than Solomon, the eternal Prince of peace and glory. Throughout this glorious Psalm of prayer and prophecy, Jehovah's gracious gifts and their blessed results are entirely interwoven ; and while we cannot mistake that the prayer is offered for things to be granted to the covenanted King's son, and

which are implored directly for Solomon, we have at the same time such expressions, that even the Jews in all ages have not denied, and could not deny, that they can refer to no other than Messiah. From verse 5 we see that the glorious result of the King's son executing righteousness and judgment will be, that Jehovah shall be feared by all men as long as the sun and moon endure; and verses 11 and 17 are enough to scorn all attempts of German and other semi-infidels to destroy the grandeur of Jehovah's Oracles. By comparing Isaiah ix. 5, 6, x. 1—10, &c., we may also see clearly who is meant by the son of the King in our Psalm, viz., that while Solomon is included in the prayer, as a type, the whole refers to the Root of the stem of Jesse, who was to be an ensign to the nations, and whose eternal rest was to be glorious.

6. He shall come down like rain upon the shorn meadow,
Like gentle showers to water the earth.
7. The righteous shall flourish in his days;
And peace shall abound until the moon be no more.
8. And his dominion shall extend from sea to sea,
And from the river to the ends of the earth.
9. The inhabitants of the wilderness shall bow before him;
And his enemies shall lick the dust.
10. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents:
The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.
11. And all kings shall worship him;
All nations shall serve him.
12. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth,
And the afflicted who hath none to help him.
13. He shall extend mercy to the miserable and needy;
Yea, the souls of the needy ones he shall save.
14. He shall redeem their souls from oppression and violence,
And their blood shall be precious in his eyes.
15. And he shall live, and he shall give him of the gold of Sheba,
And make constant intercession for him;
He shall bless him continually.*
16. There shall be abundance of corn in the land;
Even on mountains' tops, its crops shall shake like Lebanon:
And they of the city shall flourish like the grass of the earth.†

* "And he shall live," evidently refers to the poor and needy whom the King of the Covenant, the Messiah, shall deliver from spiritual misery—whose soul he should save, for he came to save the poor in spirit, and to bring consolation to the broken-hearted, and whose blood shall be precious in his eyes. This redeemed man shall live, and his Saviour shall bestow on him temporal along with spiritual blessings, for He shall give him of the gold of Sheba,—He who was rich, and became poor for the salvation of his soul, shall make him rich, for the world and the fulness thereof belong unto Him. But He shall also, and especially, give him spiritual treasures, which shall consist in his making intercession for him on the Father's throne, and in His pouring blessings on him continually.

† This verse describes the general prosperity to be enjoyed under the dominion of the great Prince of peace. The word רָבָא (Pienah), signifies "a diffusion," "a superabundance," i.e. the earth will yield her increase in great abundance. The blessing was to be diffused over

17. His name shall endure for ever ;
Before that of the sun shall His name continue ;
And in Him shall be blessed all those nations
Who shall ascribe praise to Him.
18. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel,
Who alone performeth wonderful works :
19. And ever blessed be the name of His glory :
And let His glory fill the whole earth.
Amen and amen.

HERE END THE PRAYERS OF DAVID THE SON OF JESSE.

Such was the last prayer offered by David to the God of his glorious promises on behalf of his temporal and spiritual offspring, ever keeping his inspired eye on Him who was to be his everlasting successor and the great prince on his throne. Let us dwell for a moment on the character of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, and his glorious compositions. The Ancient of Days, whose eye surveys eternity, gave His testimony regarding him even at the time when He sent His prophet to anoint him as Israel's King, that he was the man according to His own heart. This David proved to be in all his ways, and in all the circumstances in which he was placed, for he walked before God with integrity of heart, and loved Him supremely. No man on earth has been so honoured to leave such celestial treasures to the Church as he, and none ever recorded such practical lessons for the fallen children of Adam, whether they be the chief of sinners or the greatest of saints. The process of trial he underwent was severe and deeply mysterious, but he improved every step of his progress. In trouble and misery he composed Psalms which, while ages roll on and suffering men live, will, through the Spirit, prove healing balm for their diseases, and lead them to the Rock that is higher than they. In times of prosperity and gladness he praised his God in seraphic strains, and showed to the saints of all succeeding times how high a soul rejoicing in Him can soar—how dust and ashes can adore along with the angels in heaven.

From the time he entered on public life to his last hour, his conduct was honourable and consistent. His generous and patriotic feelings early developed themselves, and gained him friends among the valiant of his nation, who thenceforward held their services and lives at his disposal. In war he was a lion ; in social life a lamb ; his courage and presence of mind never failed him in danger ; nor did trouble, and misery ever sink him in despair. If before the throne of grace he poured forth his soul in dismal complaints, he rose from his knees the mighty warrior, and bore in his heart the full assurance of God's favour according to His promises. In prosperity and triumph he arrogated not the glory to himself, but ascribed it all to Jehovah of hosts, whom none other ever praised in such rapturous strains before. His soul was a fountain of adoration—a stream of thanks-

the whole land, and seen from the mountain tops ; and the same increase shall be seen among the inhabitants of the city, who shall flourish or spring up as the grass, which is another proof of the general prosperity. In verse 17 the Psalmist turns again to the king, describing His eternal glory, and then closes with a Doxology.

giving issued from his devoted heart—his tongue rejoiced in singing praise with sweet melodies, as a giant rejoices to run his race—and all his bones exclaimed, “O Jehovah, who is like unto Thee?” When Jehovah, by the promises of the covenant, exalted him on high, he was soon found humbling himself in the dust, and saying in devout wonder, “Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my father’s house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?” When the roaring lion prevailed over him for a moment, and the mighty saint lay prostrate, bound with seven strong ropes, and when Nathan came to him and reached conviction to his conscience, telling him that the spiritual Philistines—the powers of darkness, had ensnared him and were ready to devour him, he rose like one refreshed, shook his fetters from him, and with the two-edged sword of humble supplication—with the bow and shield of confession, prayers, sighs, and tears, he destroyed his spiritual adversaries, and through the very midst of their camp he cut his way into Jehovah’s sanctuary, laid hold of the throne of mercy, and obtaining pardon, was sanctified and purified, and restored to the fellowship of saints.

In the last Psalm, the contents of David’s last prayer, offered up on behalf of the great Shiloh, who was to be the last and eternal King of the covenant, and successor on David’s throne, came before us, and we shall therefore introduce at the conclusion of his history, a passage which, according to 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, contains his last words, and which we take to have been spoken on his dying bed:—

“The Oracle of David the son of Jesse—the Oracle of the man raised up on high as the anointed of the God of Jacob, and as the sweet Psalmist of Israel. The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and His word is on my tongue. The God of Israel hath said to me—the Rock of Israel hath promised to me, a righteous Ruler over mankind—a Ruler who shall rule in the fear of God. And the sun shall shine as in a bright morning—a morning without clouds; for although the tender grass springeth out of the earth by clear shining after rain, yet my house is not so with God; for with me He hath made an everlasting covenant, prepared and preserved in all perfection, for perfect is my salvation, and perfect is the object of my delight, not needing first that He make it to grow,” &c. (2 Sam. xxiii. 1—5.) The import of verses 3—5 is this: when the inspired saint lifted his eye to the distant future, and beheld Christ his promised Son, he was filled with joy at the thought of the great, eternal, and righteous Ruler over mankind springing from him. The “Sun” of verse 4 is an emblematical name of the “Ruler” in verse 3, for He Himself is the Sun of righteousness with healing under His wings. So the prophet Isaiah calls the Messiah the Sun that shall outshine the natural sun seven times (see xxx. 26, where the church is likened to the moon, and Messiah to the sun; also lx. 19, 20, lxii. 1.) That Sun was to shine from the first period of His rising, as in a bright morning, and to be interrupted by no clouds like the natural sun, for the morning of the Messiah’s rising was to be without a cloud; and the reason follows, viz., that while the rising of the natural sun might be in clouds which betoken rain that would water and fertilize the earth, which the sun, afterwards shining on, would cause the grass to spring forth on its surface—the Messiah’s rising would be bright and resplendent, for all his sufferings would previously be over, and he would continue to shine as he rose, in unclouded majesty throughout eternity. “Yet my house is not so with God,” i.e., the sure house that God

promised to build him in the Messiah is not governed by the laws of nature—no cloud must first overspread it and rain upon it, as is the case with the earth in order to make her bring forth the grass: “for with me He hath made an everlasting covenant,” *i.e.*, the promises made to him are regarding eternal things, not of things growing, and withering, and growing again, but of something that is to endure for ever. He then proceeds to show that this covenant is not such as would need to grow gradually—that Messiah’s coming forth is from the days of old, or from eternity, “prepared and preserved in all perfection,” *i.e.*, the covenant, or the great and righteous king of the covenant, and all the promised blessings that were to accompany his coming are already prepared—existing in all perfection: “for perfect is my salvation, and perfect is the object of my delight, not needing first that He make it to grow;” all is ready in the heavens—all is prepared from eternity, and hence there is no need of any clouds—no need of any rain. The Sun therefore will rise in a bright morning, and spread His radiant light for a continual, everlasting day. But in these figures we apprehend also a prophetic allusion to the changes that were to take place with regard to his temporal posterity, from whose vision clouds were often to hide the rays of the promise; but when the time of the complete fulfilment of the covenant promise in his spiritual successor, the Messiah, should arrive, no cloud would cover the glory any more for ever. Such was David’s salvation and the object of his chiefest delight, and in the hope of that salvation he was removed from a cloudy, and dark, and fleeting world, into a bright and blissful eternity.

Among the thirteen Psalms which remain to be considered, there are two which belong to Moses. These are the xc. and xci., which are not only acknowledged to be his compositions in very ancient traditions, the authenticity of which we have no reason to doubt, but the title of the first puts the matter beyond dispute with regard to it; and the fact that the second has no title at all, points to the same authorship, though, as we shall see, it treats of another subject.

PS. XC. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXXVIII.

A PRAYER OF MOSES THE MAN OF GOD.

1. O Lord, a secure habitation hast Thou been to us,
From generation to generation.
2. Before the mountains were brought forth
At Thy creating the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.
3. Thou bringest man down till he is very low;
Then saidst Thou, Return, ye children of men.
4. Though a thousand years in Thy sight are as yesterday
That is past, and as one night-watch;
5. Still hast Thou made their flowing existence like a sleep,
To vanish in the morning like grass;

6. Yea, even in the morning of its flourishing it vanisheth also,
In the evening it is cut down and withereth.
7. For we are consumed in Thine anger,
And in Thy wrath we are filled with terror.
8. Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee,
Our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance.
9. Hence all our days pass away in Thy wrath,
We spend our years like a passing thought.
10. The days of our years amount to seventy years,
And if by reason of strength they are eighty years,
Even their prolongation is but labour and misery,
For soon they are cut down, and we fly away.
11. Who knoweth the power of Thine anger ?
And that Thy wrath is in proportion to Thy fear ?
12. Teach us to number thus our days,
That we may bring a heart full of wisdom.
13. Return, O Jehovah ! how long ?
And let it repent Thee regarding Thy servants.
14. O satisfy us early with Thy tender mercy,
That we may shout for joy and be glad all our days.
15. Make us glad according to the days in which
Thou didst afflict us—the years in which we saw trouble.
16. Let Thy operations be shown to Thy servants,
And Thy majesty unto their children.
17. And may the beauty of Jehovah our God be upon us :
And do Thou establish for us the work of our hands ;
Yea, the works of our hands Thou shalt establish.*

* The plural number used throughout this Psalm shows that Moses composed it for Israel as a national prayer under peculiar circumstances. The occasion of the prayer, we think, may be easily found, and we have no doubt that it has special reference to the fearful judgment which the Lord denounced against Israel because of their provocations and murmurings, viz., that they should not enter the land of promise, but that their carcases should fall in the wilderness, and their children instead should enter it. Moses, the kind shepherd of that rebellious though severely punished flock, tried to improve the denunciation as a lesson for their souls, in that, since their untimely death was inevitable, they should prepare for eternity. After having noticed the goodness and faithfulness of God towards the pilgrim patriarchs, whose secure habitation He had always been, he says in verse 3, that after the Lord had brought Israel so low, and humbled them to the dust by the fearful judgment pronounced against them, He invites them now to repentance—that whilst their earthly existence was to be cut short in consequence of their sins, they ought to be up and doing and procure for themselves a happy eternity. From verse 5 to 10 the man of God shows them how short were their lives, and that this was the effect of their sin, but at the same time pointing out the great and important doctrine, that the sting of sin is certain death. In verse 11 he teaches Israel that God is greatly to be feared, and that His wrath is a solemn reality, and not a mere idle threat—that He is indeed a consuming fire, and therefore He is to be feared. All this was the preparation for the prayer which begins with verse 12, "Teach us to number thus our days"—to consider how short and transitory our lives are in this world ; and what would be the consequences ? "That we may bring a heart full of wisdom." This must be the rendering of יִבְרִיאָה (Venavie), "and we shall bring," or "that we may bring," i.e. with us, when after this short life we must appear before Thee—teach us not to slumber away this short time, that we may not awake as fools in eternity ; teach us to number every day of our life, and to realize every hour of it, as a time of sowing good seed that we may reap in eternity. In verses 13—15 he prays that during their short lives Jehovah would show them favour, and restore them to happiness and joy, that they might not go mourning to their untimely graves, but might depart in the assurance of His favour and love. In verses 16, 17, the prayer is on behalf of their children, who were to enter the promised land after the death of their fathers.

The following most interesting Psalm, which, as we have stated above, belongs likewise to Moses, seems to have been composed by him regarding the Angel of the Covenant who resided in the pillar of cloud and fire, and who accompanied Israel in all their journeys through the wilderness, and was sent before them into the land of promise. Moreover, Moses seems to have composed it after the Lord had revealed to him the character of this Angel when he entreated God to show him His glory, and when the Lord disclosed to him the mystery, and how He could be gracious in that Angel, while in Himself He could not pardon Israel's sin. (See on this subject my former publication on the types of the Old Testament.) In this light alone the Psalm can be made intelligible, and its different turns understood; for in it Moses addresses the Father, who was to preserve His Son, even in death, from all attempts of the devil and his devices, and he also addresses the Son regarding His security and the certainty of His triumph.

PS. XCI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXXXIX.

1. O Thou who dwellest under the covert of the Most High—
Who lodgest under the shadow of the Almighty ;
2. I say unto Jehovah, Thou art my Shelter and strong Defence—
My God in whom I put my trust :
3. For He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler—
From the pestilence of the violent.

The Angel of the Covenant who dwelt in the pillar of cloud is in these verses addressed by Moses, who shows in verses 2 and 3 that His (viz. the Angel's) deliverance as Messiah from the hands of the wicked ones was the ground on which he, (Moses,) and his nation with him, could call the Holy One of Israel "their Shelter"—"their Defence," and that by and through His sufferings and resurrection alone the Father could be long-suffering and gracious. So down to verse 13 Moses continues to address the Angel, the Messiah, on the certainty of His triumph, and of the sure deliverance that the Father would send Him.

4. With His feathers He shall cover Thee,
And under His wings Thou shalt find shelter ;
For His truth is a shield and buckler.
5. Thou shalt not be afraid of any terror by night,
Nor of the arrow that flieth by day ;
6. Of the pestilence that walketh in darkness—
Of the destruction that wasteth at noonday.
7. Though thousands should fall at Thy side,
And tens of thousands at Thy right hand,
Yet shall it not approach Thee.
8. Only with Thine eyes shalt Thou behold,
And see the recompence of the wicked.
9. For Thou, O Jehovah, art my Shelter,
Thou hast made the Most High Thy habitation.
10. No evil shall befall Thee—
No plague shall approach Thy dwelling ;

11. For He will give charge to His angels concerning Thee,
To keep Thee in all Thy ways :
12. They shall bear Thee up in their hands,
Lest Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.
13. On the lion and adder Thou shalt tread—
Thou shalt trample on the young lion and dragon.

Having described Messiah's triumph over His enemies down to verse 7, Moses addresses Jehovah the Son as his shelter, and gives the reason for it, viz. "Thou hast made the Most High Thy habitation,"—Thou art in the Father and the Father in Thee. Hence the Father is the Shelter of His people in the Son (as in verse 2), and the Son becomes the Shelter of His people because of the triumph the Father was to grant Him. It is strange that even the devil knew the Messianic reference in verses 11 and 12, and trembled at the contents of verse 13 (Math. iv. 6), though German rationalistic infidels are ignorant of it and deny it; and yet some poor deluded men will still seek light on the word of God from these pestilential devourers of its spirituality, who are more ignorant of it than the devil himself, who has taught them a theology which, however, he does not believe.

In the last three verses Jehovah the Father speaks regarding the Messiah and His glory.

14. Because He cleaveth to Me in love, I will deliver Him,
I will set Him on high because He knoweth My name.
15. He shall call on Me, and I will answer Him ;
In distress will I be with him ;
I will deliver Him, and make Him glorious.
16. With length of days will I satisfy Him,
And I will show in Him My salvation.

Of the eleven remaining Psalms, we introduce here the lxxviii., which, we think, belongs to the period when the ten tribes revolted from the house of David, and established a kingdom for themselves under Jeroboam, who was of the tribe of Ephraim. That tribe was always the most powerful, and rivalled that of Judah, and after Solomon's death they took advantage of the weakness of Rehoboam, and arrogated the dominion to themselves. Having been accustomed to go up to Jerusalem to worship, their King feared that their attachment to the temple there might induce them to fall off from him, and return to their allegiance to Rehoboam. He therefore made two golden gods in the shape of calves, and set the one in Bethel, and the other in Dan, and taught Israel to worship them instead of the God of Zion. In those days, we presume, some of the prophets composed the following Psalm, in which the rebellious act of Ephraim was rebuked, and Jehovah's choice of Zion as the only place for sacrifice and temple, and of the house of David for dominion, declared. The Psalm could not have been composed by David, nor even in his days, for in Absalom's rebellion Judah was more involved than Ephraim, and Sheba, the son of Bichri, was a Benjamite. The only period, therefore, must be that to which we have assigned it; and whoever the prophet might be

who composed it, he gave it to the Asaphites, the musical division that descended from the first chief musician, Asaph, under David, to be sung by them in the temple, as a lesson for those of Israel who attended the temple worship.

PS. LXXVIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXL.

A PSALM FOR INSTRUCTION.

To be performed by Asaph.

1. Acccept, O my people, my instruction—
Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
2. I will open my mouth with a parable—
I will recapitulate wonderful things from times of old :
3. Which we have heard and known,
For our fathers have told them unto us.
4. We will not withhold them from their children ;
That the generation to come may record Jehovah's praise,
And His might, and the wonders which He hath wrought.
5. For He established a testimony in Jacob,
And appointed a law in Israel, regarding which
He commanded our fathers to communicate it to their children ;
6. In order that the succeeding generation might know it—
That the new-born children should rise and relate it to their
children :
7. So that they might place their trust in God,
And not forget God's works,—and keep His commandments :
8. And not be a stubborn and rebellious race like their fathers—
A generation whose heart was not established,
And whose spirit was not faithful with God.
9. The children of Ephraim are like armed men carrying bows,
But who turned their back in the day of battle.
10. They have not kept the covenant of God,
And refused to walk in His law ;
11. And they forgot His deeds, and His works of wonder which
He showed them.
12. In the sight of their fathers He wrought marvels,
Even in the land of Egypt—in the field of Zoan.
13. He clave the sea, and made them pass through ;
And He made the waters to stand as an heap :
14. And led them in a cloud during the day,
And by a light of fire during the whole night.
15. He clave the rocks in the wilderness,
And made them drink of a large stream.
16. For He brought forth streams out of the rock,
And caused the water to flow like rivers.

17. Still they continued to sin against Him—
To rebel against the Most High in the wilderness.
18. And they tempted God in their heart,
In asking meat to satisfy their lust.
19. And they spake against God, saying,
Will God be able to furnish a table in the wilderness?
20. Behold, He smote the rock, that the waters gushed out,
Yea, the streams flowed abroad;
Will He also be able to give bread?—
Will He provide meat for His people?
21. Therefore, the Lord heard this, and was wroth,
And a fire was kindled against Jacob,
And anger also rose up against Israel;
22. For they believed not in God—nor trusted in His salvation,
23. Though He commanded the skies from above,
And opened the doors of heaven.
24. And He made manna rain down upon them to eat,
And gave them of the corn of heaven.
25. Every man ate that wholesome food:
He sent them provision in abundance.
26. He caused in heaven an east wind to blow;
And the south wind was produced by His power.
27. And He rained upon them meat as the dust,
And winged fowls like the sand of the sea.
28. And He made it fall in the midst of their camp—
Round about their habitations.
29. Thus they ate, and were fully satisfied;
And He granted them their own desire.
30. But ere their appetite was removed:
While their meat was yet in their mouths,
31. Behold, the wrath of God rose up against them,
And He slew the fat ones among them,
And the young men of Israel He struck down.
32. For all this they sinned still,
And believed not by all His wondrous works.
33. Then He made their days consume in vanity,
And their years in confusion.
34. When He brought a slaughter among them,
Then they sought Him, repented, and inquired eagerly for God;
35. And they remembered that God was their Rock,
And the Most High God their Redeemer.
36. Yet they flattered Him with their mouth;
And lied to Him with their tongue.
37. For their heart was not upright with Him,
And they were not steadfast in His covenant.
38. But He, the Compassionate, pardoned sin, and destroyed not:
Many a time He withdrew His anger,
And would not rouse all His wrath.

39. For He remembered they were but flesh—
A breath that passeth away, and doth not return.
40. How often did they provoke Him in the wilderness !
How often did they vex Him in the desert !
41. Yea, again and again they tempted God,
And challenged the Holy One of Israel.
42. They remembered not the manifestation of His power
On the day when He redeemed them from the oppressor :
43. When He wrought His miracles in Egypt,
And His wonders in the plain of Zoan ;
44. When He turned their rivers into blood,
And their streams, that they could not drink of them.
45. He sent among them vermin which devoured them,
And frogs which destroyed them.
46. And He gave their produce to the caterpillar,
And their labour to the locust.
47. He destroyed with hail their vines,
And their sycamore trees with frost.
48. Their cattle also He delivered to the hail,
And their flocks to the thunderbolts.
49. He sent upon them the fierceness of His wrath,
Fury, and indignation, and distress—
An expedition of tormenting angels.
50. He made straight the way for His wrath ;
He spared not their soul from death,
But delivered their lives to the pestilence.
51. And He smote all the first-born in Egypt,
The excellence of their strength, in the tents of Ham.
52. Then He led forth His people like sheep,
And guided them into the wilderness like a flock.
53. And he led them to a place of security,
So that they had nothing to fear ;
But their enemies the sea had covered.
54. And He brought them into His consecrated territory,
To this mountain which His right hand procured.
55. And He drove out the heathen before them,
And divided unto them an inheritance by line,
And made the tribes of Israel dwell in their tents.
56. But they tempted and rebelled against the Most High God,
And did not observe His testimonies.
57. Like their fathers they apostatized and revolted ;
They turned back like a deceitful bow.
58. And they provoked Him with their high places,
And roused Him to jealousy by their idols.
59. When God heard it, He was wroth ;
And He abhorred Israel exceedingly.
60. And He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh—
The tent He had pitched among men ;

61. And delivered his strength into captivity,
And his glory into the hand of the oppressor.
62. And He delivered His people to the sword,
And was wroth against His inheritance.
63. Their young men the fire devoured,
And their virgins were not given in marriage.
64. Their priests fell by the sword;
And their widows did not weep.
65. Then Jehovah awoke like one out of sleep,
Like a mighty man shouting through wine :
66. And He smote back His enemies,
And exposed them to a perpetual reproach.
67. And He rejected the tents of Joseph,
And chose not the tribe of Ephraim ;
68. But He chose the tribe of Judah—
The mountain of Zion, which He loved.
69. And He built His sanctuary like high hills—
Like the earth which He hath founded for ever.
70. And He chose David His servant,
And took him from the folds of the sheep :
71. From following the nursing ewes He took him
To feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance.
72. He also fed them in the integrity of his heart,
And by the skilfulness of his hands he guided them.

The two following Psalms which, in the common order, are the lxxxii. and lxxxiii., seem to owe their origin to the time of Jehosaphat, King of Judah. The first of them was addressed to the judges of Israel who, along with the nation, appear to have been awfully degenerate in those days, as we may gather from 2 Chron. xvii. 7—9 and xix. 4—10; from the latter passage especially, we may learn that bribery, false judgment, and all kinds of wickedness were practised among the judges of the nation. These wicked judges the King put out of office, and their successors he thus warned; "Take heed what ye do; for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in judgment. Wherefore now, let the fear of the Lord be upon you," &c. (see the passage). These warnings were written by some of the prophets in the form of the following Psalm to be sung in the temple by the Levites, the descendants of Asaph, who appear to have been the principal musicians in those days, and afterwards. The Psalm contains a warning to judges in general, and a severe sentence upon the false and wicked among them.

PS. LXXXII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXLI.

A SONG FOR ASAPH.

1. The ELOHIM is placed among the congregation of God;
Very soon shall the ELOHIM execute judgment.

2. How long will ye judge unjustly?

Will ye respect the person of the wicked, Selah, always?

The Elohim of the first verse refers to nothing else but the Ark, Cherubim, and Shechinah, often called Elohim as the Representative of the God of Israel. This is proved by the word נִצָּב (Nitzav), which means "is placed," and not, as it is erroneously rendered, "standeth." The 13th verse of Isaiah iii. is evidently an allusion to this Psalm—there God is represented as pleading with wicked judges, saying, "Jehovah (not Elohim) hath placed himself (in a pleading position) for to plead," &c. בִּקְרֹב (Bekervov), "Very soon," or within a short time, "shall the Elohim," the God that is near us, yea, that is in the midst of us, "execute judgment," *i.e.* on the wicked judges mentioned in verse 2. Though in verse 6 the judges are called "Elohim," *i.e.* the agents of God (they are likewise so styled in the Pentateuch), yet I do not find them in verse 1, for God, and God alone, is there meant by the word Elohim (comp. again 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7.)

3. Dispense justice for the destitute and fatherless—

Maintain the rights of the poor and needy.

4. Deliver the destitute and needy ones;

Rid them out of the hand of the wicked.

5. They would neither know nor understand this;

Therefore they walked on in darkness:

All the foundations of the earth are shaken.

6. Indeed I have said, Ye are gods;

And all of you, children of the Most High:

7. But surely ye shall die like common men,

And all at once shall ye fall, O ye princes!*

8. Arise, O God, judge the earth:

For Thou hast all the nations as Thy possession.

The next Psalm seems to have been composed at the time when many confederate nations came up against Jehoshaphat, on account of which the King and the nation were in great perplexity and distress, and a fast was proclaimed throughout the land. (2 Chron. xx.) Jehaziel the prophet, of the sons of Asaph, who was sent on that occasion with a cheering message from God (see the above chapter, verses 14—18), may have been himself

* After the general warning given in the first four verses, the Psalmist addresses the wicked Judges, who had probably been dismissed by Jehoshaphat: "They would neither know nor understand this," *i.e.* the facts stated in the preceding verses; "Therefore they walked on in darkness," and what were the consequences? "All the foundations of the earth were shaken;" judgment, justice, and truth are the foundations of the earth, and the true source of a nation's prosperity; and these foundations were shaken. In verse 6 the prophet says, "Indeed, I have said ye are gods," *i.e.* I thought ye were worthy of the dignity of the office ye held as the agents of God—to dispense justice in His name, and to stand in His place between man and man. But you have proved unworthy, you have vilely abused your sacred trust; and therefore ye shall die like common men—though ye have been judges, yet you must now be judged and condemned—though ye have been princes, ye shall all fall at once by the sword of Jehovah's vengeance.

the writer of the Psalm, which was intended as a supplication for Israel on the fast day. Some critics object to such a confederacy of nations as is mentioned in verses 6—8, coming against Israel all at once, alleging that they know of no such period. But, judging from the narrative, we think there can be little doubt that portions of all these nations must have accompanied Edom, Ammon, and Moab, which were the chief in the confederacy.

PS. LXXXIII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXLII.

A VOCAL SONG FOR ASAPH.

1. O God, keep not silence ; wait not, and be not still, O God.
2. For, lo, Thine enemies raise a tumult,
And they that hate Thee lift up their head.
3. Against Thy people they craftily devise plots,
And consult together against Thy hidden ones.
4. They said : Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation,
So that there be no more remembrance of the name of Israel.
5. For they consulted together with one heart ;
They entered into a confederacy against Thee.
6. The tents of Edom, and the Ishmaelites ; Moabites and Hagarites ;
7. Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek ; Philistia, with the inhabitants of Tyre ;
8. Assyria hath also joined them :
Who have been an arm to the children of Lot, Selah, always.
9. Do to them as to Midian ; as to Sisera,
As to Jabin, at the brook of Kishon :
10. Who were destroyed at Endor, and were dung for the earth.
11. Make them and their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb ;
And as Zeba and as Zalmunna all their princes ;
12. Who said : Let us possess ourselves of God's habitations.
13. O my God, make them like a whirl,
Like stubble before the wind ;
14. Like fire that consumeth the forest,
And like a flame which parcheth the mountains :
15. Even so pursue them with Thy tempest,
And confound them with Thy whirlwind.
16. Fill their faces with shame,
That they may seek Thy name, O Jehovah.
17. Let them be ashamed and confounded for ever ;
And let them be put to confusion, and perish :
18. That men may know that Thou, whose name is Jehovah,
Art alone the Most High over all the earth.

There are other three Asaphite Psalms which seem to belong to the period of King Hezekiah, and which we shall consider successively. The first of these is the lxxxii., a song for the Passover Feast, and it appears to have been composed on that solemn occasion. The good Hezekiah invited

many Israelites of the ten tribes to Jerusalem to that feast, and the result was very cheering. During fourteen days there was not only great joy in Jerusalem, but these Israelites were awakened to a sense of their sin, and returning to their land, they destroyed all their altars and high places, together with the idols which they had served, and resolved to worship God. (2 Chron. xxx., xxxi.) This Psalm seems to have been written by the prophet Isaiah (who was also the author of the lxxv. and lxxvi., the other two mentioned above), whose joy must have been very great on the occasion, and it was intended to keep alive these impressions on the minds of the Israelites, the immediate good results of which we have just noticed.

PS. LXXXI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXLIH.

"To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A PSALM FOR ASAPH.

To be performed on the Harp called Githith.*

1. Sing aloud to God who is our Strength :
Shout for joy to the God of Jacob.
2. Raise high the song, and apply the timbrel—
The sweet-sounding harp, with the psaltery.
3. Blow ye the trumpet in the month,
Which is appointed for the day of our feast ;
4. For this is an ordinance unto Israel—
A claimed right for the God of Jacob.
5. Who appointed it as a testimony in Joseph,
When He went through the land of Egypt—
When I heard the language of One unknown to me.
6. I removed his shoulder from the burden ;
His hands were released from the mortar-vessel.
7. In distress thou didst call, and I delivered thee :
I answered thee with mysterious thunders :
I proved thee at the waters of Meribah, Selah.†

* For the explanation of "Githith" the reader is referred to similar titles in which the word occurs, and their explanation in this book ; Ps. viii. chron. v. ; Ps. lxxxiv. chron. cxiv.

† In the first two verses we have a general call to Israel to come and join in the praise of the God of Jacob, and apply all manner of instruments to make the solemn joy complete. In verse 3 the Psalmist begins to describe the occasion on which he issued this general invitation, showing the importance of observing that feast which was so binding on the Israelites : "Blow ye the trumpet in the month, which is appointed," or, "in which month the day of our feast is appointed. חֹדֶשׁ (Chodesh) here does not point to the new moon, as it sometimes does, but it is emphatic, denoting the month of months—the well-known Nissan or Abib, which was the first month of the year (see Exod. xii. 2), and which month was distinguished from all others, in that the trumpet sounded the whole first part of it to remind Israel of the solemnity which it should bring to mind of the deliverance from Egypt, and to make them prepare the passover, &c. Hence he says, "Blow the trumpet בְּחֹדֶשׁ (Bachodesh) in the month—in the known month of solemnity and great joy—בַּכֶּסֶּה (Bakesseh) in the appointed (month), or, in the month fixed, i.e. for the day (meaning days) of our feast ; for that feast is an ordinance unto Israel, a claimed right of the God of Jacob." (See Exod. xii. 14—20, xiii. 1—16. The prophet then proceeds to show by whom, and the occasion on which, this feast was ordered ;

8. Hear, O my people, and I will call witnesses against thee ;
O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me.*
9. Let there be no strange god among you ;
And thou shalt worship no god of the aliens.
10. I am Jehovah thy God, that brought thee out of the land of
Egypt :
Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.
11. But my people hearkened not to my voice,
And Israel showed no regard for me,
12. Therefore I gave them over to the devices of their heart,
That they should walk after their own counsels.
13. O that my people had hearkened unto me !—
O that Israel had walked in my ways !
14. Soon would I have subdued their enemies,
And turned my hand against their adversaries.
15. The haters of Jehovah would have submitted to them,
And their happy time would have continued for ever :
16. And He would have fed them with the finest wheat ;
And with honey from the Rock I would have filled thee.

The following Psalm, the lxxv. in the common order, seems to have been composed when the Assyrian army besieged Jerusalem under Hezekiah's reign, and when, after the prayers and supplications of that godly King and the elders of Judah, the prophet Isaiah was sent with a message from God that He would destroy the enemy and deliver His people and Jerusalem from their affliction. (See 2 Kings xix. 20—31, &c.) The title is borrowed from those of David's Psalms which were composed by him when he was in great danger from Saul, and when in hope of speedy deliverance, he used the title, "Al Tashcheth Le David," "Thou shalt

"Who ordered it," i.e. the God of Jacob ordered it, "as a testimony in Joseph." Joseph is here mentioned, for, as we stated above, this Psalm was intended to awaken those visitors who came from the ten tribes to Jerusalem on Hezekiah's invitation, and to show them that it was given unto all Israel (of whom the descendants of Joseph were the most numerous), and that the ten tribes of Israel lay under the same obligation as the tribe of Judah did, &c. He then goes on to mention the time when the God of Jacob appointed that feast as a testimony for Israel, viz. "When He went through the land of Egypt," i.e. when Jehovah said, "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born . . . and when I see the blood I will pass over you," &c. (Exod. xii. 12—13) : It was then that Israel, the miserable slaves of the Egyptians, heard the language of deliverance from the mouth of a God hitherto unknown to them. (See Exod. iii. 13.) The prophet thus introduced the God of Jacob as the speaker, and He it is who speaks in verse 6, and onward to the end of the Psalm. In verse 7 the overwhelming scene at the Red Sea is referred to, when Israel in their great distress called upon God, who confounded the Egyptian army by pillars of lightnings, and by mysterious, or terrible thunders. (See Exod. xiv. 24.) The Schüh, inserted by later prophets, only marks the pause, but has no part in the sense. In the second part of the Psalm, the prophet endeavours to improve the lesson to the hearers by showing them that it is the same God who is still speaking to them, and reminding them of their obligation, he calls them to repentance. The reader is requested carefully to compare this Psalm with the passages quoted both in the preface and in this note.

* The Lord, who is the speaker here, is represented as using the language in which He spoke to Israel in the days of old—when He took heaven and earth to witness against them (see Deut. xxxi. 28, xxxii. 1, compare also Ps. l., chronologically lxxvi. 7, where the same language is used, and exposition there.) In the verses which follow, the consequences of Israel's disobedience are described, yet they are still called to repentance.

not destroy David," *i.e.* Jehovah is strong enough to deliver me. So here, Sennacherib threatened destruction, but God having promised deliverance, the title of the Psalm therefore is "Al Tashchethb," "Thou shalt not destroy," and it was sung with the melody of David's "Al Tashchethi" Psalms (comp. title of Ps. lix., chron. Ps. xi., where this is largely explained.)

PS. LXXV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXLIV.

"To the Chief Cause of all Events."

Thou shalt not destroy.

A VOCAL SONG FOR ASAPH.

1. We give thanks to Thee, O God, we give thanks ;
For Thy name is near—Thy works of wonder declare it.

[THE PROPHET IN THE NAME OF GOD.]

2. Behold, I have appointed a time—
I will execute righteous judgment.
3. The earth and its inhabitants melt for fear,
But I have established her pillars, Selah, for ever.

An intimate acquaintance with the portion of history to which this Psalm belongs, will form the best exposition of it. The Assyrian king, by his immense victories, had caused all the inhabitants of the earth to tremble, and now he came with a vast army, and with a mouth full of blasphemy against the nation of that God who had planted the pillars of the earth, and who rules all its inhabitants. Hezekiah and all Judah trembled, and cried to Jehovah, who heard them, and sent Isaiah to tell them that He would soon make known His name by His wonder-works—that He had now appointed a time to judge and destroy the Assyrian King and his power, and to requite him for his blasphemy. This is the burden of the Psalm, but we remind the reader again to compare that part of history either as it is recorded in 2 Kings xviii., xix., or Isaiah xxxvi., xxxvii., which will be the best commentary.

4. I have said to the blasphemers, BlaspHEME not ;
And to the wicked, Lift not up the horn ;
5. Lift not your horn on high—speak not with a stiff neck.
6. For neither from the east, nor from the west,
Nor yet from the south, cometh exaltation.
7. But God himself is the Judge :
The one He bringeth low, and the other He exalteth.
8. Behold, there is a cup in Jehovah's hand,
Filled with a mixture of fermented wine :
Out of this He shall pour ; so that even the dregs thereof
The wicked of the earth shall squeeze out and drink.

THE KING.

9. But as for me, I shall declare it for ever ;
I shall sing praise to the God of Jacob.
10. And I will cut off all the horns of the wicked ;
But the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

According to Jehovah's promise in this Psalm, so it happened. The proud Assyrian soon knew that all exaltation comes from God, the God of Israel. A cup of bitterness was put into his hand—in one night an angel of the Lord destroyed his mighty army, and the host of a hundred and eighty thousand mighty warriors, who were the terror of many nations on the evening before, lay all dead carcasses on the succeeding morning. The following Psalm celebrates that wonderful event.

PS. LXXVI. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXLV.

“To the Chief Cause of all Events.”

A VOCAL SONG OF PRAISE FOR ASAPH, TO BE PERFORMED WITH MUSIC.

[See foot note, page 322.]

1. God is known in Judah ; His name is great in Israel.
2. In Salem is His tabernacle, and His habitation in Zion.
3. There He broke the flying arrows of the bow—
The shield, the sword, along with the war, Selah, for ever.
4. Thou (Zion) art more glorious—more excellent,
Than the mountains of prey.
5. The stout-hearted were confounded ;
They have sunk into their sleep :
And all the mighty men have not found their hands.
6. At Thy rebuke, O Thou God of Jacob !
They fell asleep, along with the chariots and horses.
7. Thou art dreadful, even Thou ;
And who can stand before Thee in time of Thy wrath ?
8. From heaven didst Thou pronounce judgment :
The earth feared, and was still.
9. Whenever God riseth up to judgment,
It is to save all the meek of the earth, Selah, always.
10. For even the wrath of man bringeth Thee praise,
When Thou girdest Thyself with but a little fury.
11. Vow and pray to Jehovah your God :
Let all those that are about Him bring presents to the Terrible One.
12. He doth cut off the spirit of the princes—
He is terrible to the kings of the earth.

The five remaining Psalms belong to the disastrous period of the de-

struction of Jerusalem by the Assyrians and Chaldeans. They must have been all composed after the temple was burnt by the army of Nebuzar-adan (2 Kings xxv. 8—12), and Judah partly destroyed by fire and sword and famine, and partly led into captivity, and when only the poor and miserable were left to till the desolate ground. The fact that the prophet who wrote them seems not to have been in captivity, but in the midst of the ruins of Jerusalem, is proof enough that Jeremiah must be their author, and that he composed them along with his Lamentations (the resemblance between which and these Psalms in style and poetry is very striking) when, by the order of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzar-adan set him at liberty, and he returned to Jerusalem. (Jer. xxxix. 11—14, xl. 1—6.) Three of the Psalms bear the name of Asaph in their titles, but this is by no means because he is the author of them, for, as we have repeatedly before observed, Asaph was the chief musician in David's days, and his band, consisting of his descendants, continued to form a musical band under the name of Asaph their forefather, even down to the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. (Ezra ii. 41, iii. 10; Neh. xi. 22, &c.) Jeremiah, knowing that the temple must be re-built, and the service of God re-organized, inserted in the title of these plaintive Psalms the words, "for Asaph," *i.e.*, to be sung by the Asaphites. Besides that the author of this book has seen it testified by traditions—the authenticity of which he has no reason to doubt—that these Psalms were written by Jeremiah, he maintains, that the least knowledge of, and acquaintance with, Hebrew poetry, will make it manifest that the author of the Book of Lamentations and of these Psalms must be one and the same person.

PS. LXXIV. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXLVI.

A SERIOUS PRAYER. FOR ASAPH.

1. Why, O God, hast Thou cast us off?
Shall Thine anger smoke for ever against the sheep of Thy pasture?
2. Remember Thy congregation which Thou hast purchased of old;
The stock of Thine inheritance which Thou hast redeemed;
This Mount Zion, on which Thou didst dwell.
3. Lift up Thy feet to the perpetual desolations;
Every thing in the sanctuary hath the enemy destroyed.
4. Thine adversaries have exclaimed within Thy sacred palaces:
"They have set up their own symbols as signs;
5. It will be regarded above no more than
One passing his axe through a thick tree.
6. Now, therefore, let all her carved work at once
Be torn down with hatchet and hammer."
7. Thus they have set Thy sanctuary on fire—
They profaned to the dust the habitation of Thy name.
8. They have said in their heart; "Their own children
Have burnt all the sacred palaces of God in the land."

9. Our usual signs we have not seen : there is no prophet ;
Nor is there any among us who knoweth how long.*
10. How long, O God, shall the adversary reproach ?
Shall the enemy blaspheme Thy name for ever ?
11. Why hast thou withdrawn Thy hand ?
O remove now Thy right hand from Thy bosom !
12. But Thou, God, art my King from of old,
Who workest salvation in the midst of the earth.
13. Thou didst break through the sea by Thy strength :
Thou didst shatter the heads of the dragons in the waters.
14. Thou didst crush the heads of Leviathan :
Thou gavest it for meat to the people in the wilderness.
15. Thou didst cleave the fountain and the brook ;
Thou didst dry up the mighty streams.
16. Thine is the day, Thine also is the night :
Thou hast prepared the light and the sun.
17. Thou hast fixed the boundaries of the earth :
Summer and winter Thou hast ordained.
18. Remember this, O Jehovah, how the enemy hath reproached ;
And how a foolish people hath blasphemed Thy name.

* In verse 4 the Psalmist describes the melancholy scene when the Chaldeans came into the temple to strip it of its sacred vessels, and of the carved works of gold with which the walls were overlaid. From the address of the Assyrian general to Israel in the days of Hezekiah (see 2 Kings xviii. 25), "Am I now come without the Lord against this place to destroy it?" &c., we see that these enemies were not entirely ignorant of the greatness of Israel's God. But the Chaldean soldiers were struck with awe when they saw the symbols on the walls of the sanctuary, and they said to each other, "They have set up their own symbols for signs" i.e. it is Israel's own invention—there is no sacredness in them, and therefore we have nothing to fear in cutting down these carved works. The 5th verse must be properly arranged to be made intelligible in any other language owing to its high poetical style. יָדָע לְמַעַל (Yivada Lemaalah), "It will be known, or regarded above," i.e. our cutting down the carved

works of Israel's own invention will be regarded, or no more regarded above, viz. in heaven כִּמְעִיב בְּסַחֲךְ—עַץ קָדְמוֹת (Kemevie bisvach-etz Kardumoth), "than one passing his axe through, or bringing his axe to bear upon, a thick tree," i.e. our cutting down of these symbols will no more concern God than one's cutting wood in the forest. Thus they encouraged each other as in verse 6, "Let all her carved work at once be torn down with hatchet and hammer." The result, stated in verse 7, was the utter destruction of God's sanctuary. In verse 8 the Psalmist gives us another reason for the enemies' boldness in thus destroying the sanctuary, viz. that they had heard how some (godly) kings had broken the altars and high places of the idolatrous Jews as Hezekiah had done, and Josiah, who burnt Baal's altars and temples. This the idolatrous Assyrians counted a great crime, for they knew no difference between these idol temples and the temple of the living God. The reader will find an illustration of this in 2 Kings xviii. 22). Thus in verse 8 the enemy is represented as having said in his heart, יָנִיחַ (Ninon yachad), "Their own children or descendants (נֶן [Nin], means progeny or descendant, as in Gen. xxi. 23, נִינִי [Nini], which is rendered "my son,"

but which means progeny, see also Job xviii. 19; Isai. xiv. 22), have burnt all the sacred places of God in the land," that is to say, Why should we fear to do what they have done themselves?—if Hezekiah and Josiah, &c., have burnt the temples of God (as they falsely thought they were), why may not we do the same? The words which we have rendered in verses 4 and 8 by "sacred palaces," mean the "sacred assembly halls," where the people assembled to worship God. (The strange ideas which translators and commentators have found in these verses are quite inexplicable by us, for the Hebrew is plain though sublime). From verse 4 we may learn that at the time when the broken hearted prophet composed this Psalm, the revelation that Israel should be restored after seventy years had not been made to him. The expression, "There is no prophet," does not mean that no prophet was then living, but that no prophet had received Divine intimation as to how long the desolation would continue. (Compare Lam. ii. 9). The rest of the Psalm is occupied with prayer and praise.

19. Deliver not to the wild beast the soul of Thy turtle-dove ;
Forget not for ever the lives of Thine afflicted ones.
20. Remember Thy covenant, for the dark regions of the earth
Are full of the habitations of violence.
21. O let not the oppressed return ashamed :
But let the poor and needy praise Thy name.
22. Arise, O God, plead Thine own cause :
Remember how the profligate daily reproach Thee.
23. Forget not the noise of Thine adversaries :
The tumult of Thine opponents increaseth continually.

PS. LXXIX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXLVII.

A SONG FOR ASAPH.

1. O God, the heathen have come into Thine inheritance ;
They have polluted Thy holy temple ;
They have laid Jerusalem in heaps.
2. They have given the bodies of Thy servants
For food to the fowls of heaven—
The flesh of Thy saints to the beasts of the earth.
3. Their blood they have shed like water around Jerusalem ;
And there was no one to bury them.
4. We are become a reproach to our neighbours—
A scorn and derision to those around us.
5. How long, O Jehovah ? Wilt Thou ever be angry ?
Shall Thy jealousy burn like fire ?
6. Pour out Thy fury on the heathen who own Thee not,
And on the kingdoms which call not on Thy name.
7. For they have devoured Jacob,
And his habitation they have laid waste.
8. Remember not against us the iniquities of our ancestors :
Make haste to meet us with Thy tender mercies ;
For we are brought exceedingly low.
9. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy name.
Deliver us, and forgive our sins for Thy name's sake.
10. Why should the heathen say, Where is their God ?
Make known among the heathen in our sight
The vengeance of the shed blood of thy servants.
11. Let the groanings of the prisoners come before Thee :
According to the greatness of Thy power
Preserve Thou those that are appointed to die ;
12. And render to our neighbours' bosom sevenfold
The reproach which they have cast on Thee, O Jehovah.
13. But we are Thy people, and sheep of Thy pasture ;
We shall for ever render thanks to Thee ;
Throughout all generations we shall declare Thy praise.

The following Psalm, the lxxx., also belongs to the same author, and was composed at the same disastrous time as the two preceding ones. It has in its title "El Shoshanim Eduth," which means, "A testimony regarding the Lilies," i.e. regarding the Church of God. The testimony refers to the Messianic prophecy contained in verses 15 and 17 regarding the Son of God redeeming His Church—the Lily among thorns. For farther explanation of this title the reader is referred to pages 394 and 401, where similar titles occur.

PS. LXXX. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXLVIII.

"To the Chief Cause of all Events."

A TESTIMONY REGARDING THE LILIES.—A SONG FOR ASAPH.

1. O Shepherd of Israel, who didst lead Joseph like a flock, give ear;
O Thou who art enthroned between the Cherubim, shine forth.
2. Before Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh,
Stir up Thy strength, and come to save us.
3. O God, restore us again, and cause Thy face to shine;
And so we shall be saved.*

* The "Israel and Joseph" mentioned in the first verse by the Psalmist include all the twelve tribes of Israel, for there was no distinction between Judah and Ephraim now, inasmuch as both were driven into captivity, and both countries lay waste. That under Joseph alone the whole Israelitish nation is sometimes represented, see Psalm lxxxi., chronologically Psalm cxlii. 5. The same we see in verse 3, where the Psalmist uses the names of three tribes to denote all Israel, for if we were to understand under Ephraim all the ten tribes, then there would have been no use of mentioning Manasseh, who was included in the ten tribes, but as all Israel were now in misery and captivity, the prophet, praying for their deliverance, mentions a part of the ten tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim, and a part of the two tribes, Benjamin. Though Judah is often mentioned in Scripture as denoting both Judah and Benjamin, it was because the former, having the dominion, was the principal tribe; but now, as Judah was in captivity along with Benjamin, the prophet uses the latter to include both.

The reader will perhaps be surprised at the following specimen of German false inventions, yea, uncommon assurance. We have often shown in this book how easy it is with a German rationalist to sacrifice the sense and sentiment of any passage, and introduce woeful perversions when it serves him to maintain his violent notions; but as we have just said, the following is very glaring. Hengstenberg, on this Psalm, tries most absurdly to maintain that it refers only to the ten tribes, and not to Judah. To support this opinion he makes several false assertions, one of which, for instance, is, "that Joseph always appears as the leader of the ten tribes," and not of all Israel; but from the passage above referred to (Ps. lxxxi. 5), the reader will see that this assertion is false. Another of his assertions is, that the "Joseph" of Amos vi. 6 is used only of the ten tribes; but let the reader examine verses 1 and 8, yea, the whole of that chapter, and he will see that it is false also, and that Joseph must stand there for the whole nation. But after all, the "Benjamin" of verse 2 lies in his way, and here let the reader specially mark how falsely he deals with Scripture. He is not ashamed to maintain that Benjamin, as a tribe, was never joined to Judah, but to Ephraim—that only a few of the Benjamites who dwelt in Jerusalem and had a portion in it, were joined to Judah, but that the whole tribe, as such, adhered to Ephraim. In opposing the right view and the truth, that Benjamin joined Judah from the beginning, and remained with Judah to the end, Dr Hengstenberg makes the following remark: "If we turn now to the evidence in support of the opposite view, we find, as wholly favouring it, the passage 1 Kings xii. 21, according to which Rehoboam assembled the whole of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin. But a whole series of other passages demonstrates that the author loosely, though, after all, with sufficient accuracy, as the real state of matters was universally known, employed the tribe of Benjamin to denote that small portion of the tribe which was incorporated with Judah, so that we are to supply as understood: so far as it remained faithful to Judah."

Thus thinks a German writer that he has managed to give a new view of a thing that was

4. O Jehovah, God of hosts, how long wilt Thou be wroth
Against the prayer of Thy people ?
5. Thou feedest them with tears as with bread,
And makest them drink tears in abundance.
6. Thou makest us a strife to our neighbours,
And our enemies use us for their derision.
7. O God of hosts, restore us again ;
Cause Thy face to shine, and so we shall be saved.
8. A vine Thou didst bring out of Egypt ;
Thou didst cast out the heathen, and didst plant her.
9. Thou didst prepare room for her,
That she took deep root and filled the land.
10. The mountains were covered with her shadow,
And with her branches the lofty cedars.
11. She stretched forth her boughs to the sea,
And her shoots to the great river.
12. Why hast Thou broken down her walls,
So that every one passing by should plunder her ?—
13. That the boar of the forest should waste her,
And the beasts of the field should devour her ?
14. Return, we beseech Thee, O God of hosts :
Look from heaven and behold, and visit this vine ;
15. And the plantation which Thy right hand hath planted ;
Even through the Son, whom Thou didst invest with power for
Thyself.
16. She was cut down and burnt with fire :
They perish at the rebuke of Thy countenance.
17. Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand—

established for eighteen centuries to every Bible reader, be he Jew or Christian, that the whole tribe of Benjamin remained with Judah ; but no, says Dr Hengstenberg, only a few of those Benjamites that had part in Jerusalem and in the "declivity of the upper city," remained with Judah, while the whole tribe joined Ephraim. He quotes only one passage as being wholly against his view, viz., 1 Kings xii. 21. Let us now examine our Bible, and see if this be true. The above passage is repeated in 2 Chron. xi. 1. We are told in verses 3 and 4 of the same chapter, that the prophet was sent to Judah and Benjamin to warn them not to fight against the ten tribes. From verse 5 to 11 we are told that both tribes remained faithful to Rehoboam, and that he built fortresses in the territories of Judah and Benjamin. Verse 23, "And he (Rehoboam) dealt wisely, and dispersed of all his children throughout all the countries of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fenced city," &c. Chapter xiv. 8, "And Asa had an army of men that bare targets and spears, out of Judah three hundred thousand, and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and fourscore thousand : all these were mighty men of valour." If these passages are not enough to show how barefacedly German rationalists treat the Bible, let the reader examine the following passages : 2 Chron. xv. 8, 9, xvii. 17, xxv. 5, xxxi. 1, xxxiv. 9, 32; Ezra i. 5, iv. 1, x. 9. Now we think that these passages will suffice to show how little to be depended on, nay, how false, Dr Hengstenberg's statement is ; and also, how much to be lamented is the folly of some who think that such perversions and suppressions, as well as others which we have endeavoured to expose in this volume, will cast light on Scripture. Will darkness give light ? Bitter complaints have already been made of the ravages which German theology is making in this orthodox, Christian country.

In reference to the subject of this note we may add, that every attentive reader of the Bible will perceive, that as the ten tribes were usually styled Ephraim, because that tribe was the most powerful among them, so the two tribes Judah and Benjamin were always styled Judah, because the latter was the ruling tribe. But in our Psalm they were both captive, and either of them stood for both.

Upon the Son of man, whom Thou didst invest with power for Thyself.

18. Thus we shall no more slide back from Thee :
Thou shalt quicken us, and we shall be called by Thy name.
19. Jehovah, God of Hosts, restore us again :
Make Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.*

Psalm cxxxvii. must also have been composed by Jeremiah, when, by the order of Nebuchadnezzar, he was set free from chains and sent back to Jerusalem. In it he describes a scene which he must himself have witnessed at the rivers of Babylon when the spoilers of the broken-hearted Levites demanded of them some of Zion's songs on their sweet instruments ; but their souls were too heavily overborne with grief to allow them to string the harp or make sweet melody.

PS. CXXXVII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CXLIX.

1. By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down ;
Yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.
2. Upon the willows in the midst thereof we hung our harps :
3. For there our captors demanded of us to repeat a song,
And they that laid us in ruins, to be merry :
"Sing us some of the songs of Zion."
4. O how shall we sing Jehovah's songs in a foreign land ?
5. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand be forgotten.
6. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
If I do not remember thee—
If I make not mention of Jerusalem on occasion of my chiefest joy.
7. Remember, O Jehovah, unto the children of Edom, Jerusalem's day ;

* The prophet, who, in verse 14, prayed the Lord to look down from heaven and visit "the vine," the nation that He had delivered out of Egypt and planted in Palestine, and in midst of which the Church of God existed at that time, though in captivity in Babylon—prays in verse 15, for the Church in general, "the plantation (so צִמְחָה [Channah] signifies, a group of plants) which His right hand hath planted," i.e. the Church which He had planted in the midst of Israel, and which was to extend her branches throughout the world in His own time. This general Church, which was brought very low in those days, or, as he describes it in verse 16, as having been burnt with fire, and her members perished at God's rebuke ; Jehovah would visit in mercy "through the Son" her Head, whom He had invested with power for the promotion of His own glory on earth. The בֶּן (Ben) of verse 15, which is erroneously rendered "branch," means "Son," for it is the same with the בֶּן-אָדָם (Ben-Adam) "Son of man," of verse 17. The whole import of the prayer contained in these verses is, that Jehovah would look down in mercy upon the suffering Church for the sake of Messiah her Head, and that "Jehovah Tzidkenu," the Lord our Righteousness, should soon appear in the strength and divine Majesty with which God had invested Him, even for the deliverance of the Church, and for the promotion of His own glory. The blissful results of His appearance would be, that the true Israel of God would never again depart from Him, but stick close to their Redeemer, and be saved with an everlasting salvation.

- When they said, Raze it, raze it, to its very foundation.
 8. O Thou daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction;
 Blessed be He who shall reward thee as thy recompence
 All that thou hast recompensed us.
 9. Blessed be He who shall dash thy little ones against the rock.*

The following and last Psalm in this book is the cii. in the common order. It contains the lamentation of the prophet for the destruction of Zion and Jerusalem, and his own sufferings in connection with the destruction of his nation. It also foretells Israel's restoration, and the rebuilding of Zion, and concludes with an ardent prayer to God to hasten that time.

PS. CII. CHRONOLOGICALLY PS. CL.

A Prayer of an afflicted one, when he was overwhelmed, and poured out his supplication before Jehovah.

1. O Jehovah, hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto Thee.
2. Hide not Thy face from me in the day of my distress;
 Incline Thine ear to me in the day when I call;
 Do Thou speedily answer me.
3. For my days vanish away like smoke,
 And my bones are burut like a fire-brand.
4. My heart is smitten and withered like grass,
 For I have forgotten to eat my meat.
5. Because of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my flesh.
6. I am like unto the pelican in the wilderness;
 I am become like the owl of the ruins.
7. When I watched, I was like a lonely bird on a house-top.
8. All day long mine enemies reproached me—
 My persecuting scoffers are sworn against me.
9. For ashes have I eaten like bread,
 And my drink have I mingled with tears;

* In chapters l. and li. of Jeremiah's prophecies we see how the destruction of Babylon was revealed to that prophet long before it came to pass, and in l. 17, 18. we see that it was in recompense of what Assyria and Chaldea had done to Israel. Thus the prophet says in verse 8, "O thou daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction," i.e. according to God's revelation made to me; "Blessed be He," i.e. God the righteous Judge. It is astonishing that throughout the Bible the translators have rendered אֲשֶׁרֶךְ (Ashrey), "Blessed," while it very often means "happy," especially when it refers to man; and here, when it refers to God, they have rendered it, "Happy." But they erred in thinking that its reference here is to the instrument by which Babylon was to be destroyed, for it was to God alone, who was to make Babylon drink such a cup as they had made Israel drink (though he was to do it, as usual, by instruments). Israel's traditions say, that at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonian murderers there were found upon one rock the brains of eight hundred of the little children of Zion which were dashed out by the enemy. Profane history tells us of no less horrible things in the fearful destruction of Babylon by her enemies. Thus we see that the last verses of our Psalm contain not a prayer, but a prophecy which received its literal fulfilment. It is a wonderful fact that no nation ever shed the blood of God's ancient people without tasting of His heavy judgments in return, and without draining a similar cup.

10. On account of Thy wrath and indignation :
For Thou didst lift me up, and then Thou didst cast me down.
11. My days have declined as a shadow,
And I do wither like the grass.

It is very easy to discover in this part of the Psalm the voice of the author of the Lamentations, especially when we compare it with the third chapter of that book. Jeremiah came back into the midst of the ruins of his beloved Zion and Jerusalem, and wailing and mourning he waited in the midst of the desolations for some comfortable message from God. Hence he says in verse 7, "When I watched," or waited anxiously, "I was like a lonely bird on a house-top;" or as he said in the preceding verse, that he was "like an owl of the ruins." But we must not forget that he speaks here for the whole nation when he pours his complaints before Jehovah, for it is of the nation he says that their wounds are increased, because the Lord did lift them up above all other nations, and then did cast them down from the height of glory and honour to this depth of misery and wretchedness.

12. But Thou, O Jehovah, shalt endure for ever,
And Thy remembrance throughout all generations.
13. Thou wilt yet arise, and extend mercy to Zion,
When the fixed time to be gracious to her hath arrived :
14. When Thy servants shall have taken pleasure in her stones,
And shown affection to her very rubbish.
15. Then shall the nations fear the name of Jehovah,
And all the kings of the earth Thy glory.
16. When Jehovah shall have builded up Zion—
When he shall have appeared in His glory :
17. When He hath regarded the petition of the destitute,
And hath not despised their prayers.
18. This shall be written for the generation to come,
That a people to be born may praise Jehovah.
19. Because he looked down from the height of His sanctuary—
Jehovah from the heavens surveyed the earth ;
20. That He might hear the groanings of the prisoners—
That He might release such as are doomed to death ;
21. That they may declare in Zion the name of Jehovah,
And His praise in Jerusalem :
22. When the nations shall assemble together,
And the kingdoms to serve Jehovah.

While we see in the above verses the brightness of hope and consolation which refreshed the prophet in receiving a sure foundation to rest upon, that Zion should be re-built and her captives restored, we see also from verses 15 and 22 that he beheld not only the Israelitish captive church restored, but also the glory of Zion in the Messiah, who was to appear during the period of the second temple as a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel. The conversion of all nations to God formed the ray that shone so radiantly to the prophet in his darkness—the

building of the spiritual Zion was his chiefest joy, though the beginning of it was the re-building of the temporal Zion and the restoration of His crushed and captive nation. But in verse 23 he returns to lament the present miserable condition of the Church—prays that even the then living generation might see Zion re-built, and comforts himself that Jehovah lives for ever, and that the descendants of the generation then living should see the salvation of God.

23. He hath exhausted my strength in the way ;
He hath shortened my days.
24. Shall I say, O my God, take me not away in the midst of
my days ?
O, Thy years extend throughout all generations.
25. Of old Thou hast founded the earth ;
And the heavens are the works of Thine hands.
26. But they shall perish, and Thou shalt remain ;
When they all shall wax old like a garment,
Thou shalt change them as a cloak and they shall be changed :
27. But Thou art He, and Thy years shall never end.
28. The sons of Thy servants shall dwell in peace ;
And their seed shall be established before Thee.

There exists a striking analogy between one leading idea in this sublime Psalm and chapter xlix. of Isaiah. In the first 13 verses of that chapter, the glory of Messiah, and the conversion of all the nations to Him is foretold, while literal Zion and her children remain behind in their darkness and dispersion, and looking, as it were, to what is going on among the nations. She therefore utters a melancholy complaint in verse 14, and says, "Surely Jehovah hath forsaken, or abandoned me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." Jehovah then comes and tells her her mistake, and that she was still graven on the palms of His hand—that He would, to her astonishment, gather all her children, though of late generations, and restore them to her again. So in our Psalm, after the then captive Church, Zion, heard of the bringing in of all nations, she remembers that she was at present worn out, and crushed, and weakened, and exhausted from her sufferings during her captivity and sojourn in the land of the enemy. She was therefore disposed to complain (verses 23 and 24), that in the present generation she could not enjoy the glory of the promised restoration. But she soon comforts herself with the assurance that her God is eternal, and that His promises never fail; and though she herself should not see it in the present generation, yet Jehovah's days are throughout all generations, and that therefore the descendants of her present children would enjoy that glorious promised peace, and their seed be established before Jehovah for ever.

Now blessed be Jehovah the Lord God of Israel, who magnified His Holy name by the revealed Oracles of His condescending love. Ever adored, ever glorified, and ever blessed be the Ancient of Days, who pro-

vided such an invaluable treasure of living and everlasting testimonies to the message, character, office, and eternal glory of His only begotten Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—that these testimonies were given many centuries before His coming into the world, and deposited with the Church of the living God, so that our blessed Saviour, when in the flesh, could say, Search the Scriptures, your own Scriptures, given by your inspired heroes, and sealed by signs and miracles, yea, by fire from heaven, and they speak of me. Though in the time of our blessed Lord, the greatest portion of His nation were blinded, and could not see Jesus in their Scriptures—though alas in our days German rationalists rise against the testimonies of Old Testament Scripture to the Lamb of God, and apply all their wicked energy to pervert its most glorious Messianic prophecies, and to blot out the name of Messiah from its pages—ah! but Jehovah's arm is not shortened, nor is His Omnipotence decreasing by reason of age. Even as in the days of old the Lord was pleased to open the eyes of many Israelites, and show them Christ from their own Scriptures, though the great mass of proud and hardened Pharisees were blinded and confounded in their imagined wisdom, “so then at the present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace,” while those who refuse to yield a childlike obedience to the oracles of God, and irreverently, yea arrogantly try to bend Jehovah's revealed truth, and make it bow to the idols of their own poor, weak, crooked, and foolish inventions, will grow worse and worse, and land in a dreadful region of everlasting darkness. Be it Jew or German, Greek or Briton, who raises partition walls between himself and the shining light of the word of God, it is certain that his eyes will grow darker and darker, and a complete gloom will cover his soul.

Inasmuch as it pleased Divine goodness to open the eyes of the author of this book and show him the Saviour of his soul in the Old Testament Scriptures (before he saw the New), in which his forefathers as he himself gloried, and as the book of Psalms, along with the prophecies of Isaiah, was that living stream that poured refreshing waters of conviction into his soul that the Messiah must have come already, and that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Saviour, the Son of God, of whom the Psalmist and Isaiah spake, the reader will perceive how great must be his joy when seeing that the Lord enabled him to begin and finish a work on the sweet and inspired songs of Zion. Yea, his joy is greater than he can express in words; and it is the wish of his heart and soul that every reader of this book, and every friend of the holy Psalms, may find such cheering and solemn hours, days, and nights as he often enjoyed during the composition of this book, especially when in the silent watches of the night his soul mused on the Messianic oracles in which she beheld her beloved Saviour as in a pure crystal mirror. He only regrets that his time was so short—that his call to proceed to the scene of

his missionary labours pressed so heavily upon his conscience, that he was obliged to shorten that happy time by turning many nights into days. Another result issuing from this is no less a matter of regret to him, viz., that neither time nor the limits of the volume allowed him to give a fuller exposition to some Psalms towards the end of the volume, which he, however, will do, if spared in the land of the living, and if enabled by the patronage of Christians in this country to send forth another edition. The steps of man are directed by the Lord, when it be that He finds pleasure in his way. The author humbly casts himself into the arms of the Omnipotent God, for the promotion of whose glory in explaining the oracles of His truth this work was intended, and may He who so often uses weak instruments for great purposes, bless and grant success to it, and make it a blessing to the Christian reader, and teach him by the Spirit of all truth, to choose, love, and reverence all that is His and according to His will, and to exercise Christian charity and forbearance where man's weakness betrays itself. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of God shall stand for ever." (Isai. xl. 8.)

FINIS.